

A NEWSPAPER IS BORN: THE GENESIS
OF THE STILLWATER NEWS-PRESS

By

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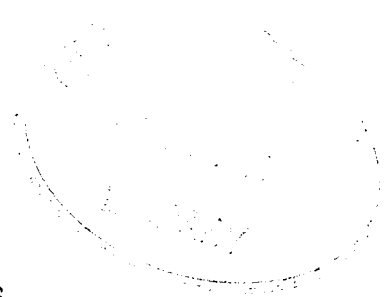
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PREFACE

There are many who deserve gratitude for their help in making this thesis possible: Librarians at both the Oklahoma State University and Stillwater City Library offered the writer a great deal, as did those at the Oklahoma State Historical Society Library at Oklahoma City and at the University of Oklahoma at Norman. Others who were invaluable included E. E. "Hook" Johnson and Irvin Hurst, former partners in the Stillwater Daily News, Randle Perdue, the late R. Marsden Bellatti, James R. Bellatti, L. F. Bellatti, Jone Hawkins, whose typing skills were vital as the thesis was refined, and most of all, Dr. Harry Heath. There were, of course, many others who provided varying degrees of assistance.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

To fully understand a historical delineation of Stillwater's News-Press, one must be aware of the convoluted development of earlier area newspapers. During a period that began roughly in the late 1870s and ended in the late 1890s, more than 50 Payne County newspapers, some lasting no more than a few weeks, struggled to survive.

The economics of publishing led many of these papers to merge, while some, usually unsuccessfully, tried to prosper independently. And although lack of profit caused the demise of many of the short-lived newspapers, one should also know that some of these newspapers were never intended as chroniclers of community events; often the papers were primarily a means to espouse political support for transitory party ideologies or favored candidates.

As the fortunes of candidates and their parties grew in acceptance or were blown away by the prevailing political winds, these early papers found themselves prospering or being discarded like so much chaff. Considering the wide spectrum of political thought prevalent in Payne County during those tumultuous days, it seems strange that so little evidence concerning many of these publications exists.

Need for the Study

A formidable challenge faced the writer in developing this

historical account. Although a few front pages from these fleeting publications are on file at area libraries, little in the way of a synthesized historical account is available. Robert Cunningham, who probably has done more than anyone to document Payne County's history, was the thesis writer's best--and in many instances, only--source in unearthing evidence of these erstwhile publications.

But even Cunningham, in his accounts of the county's history, was limited often to no more than a passing reference to journalistic pioneers.

Limitations

This thesis originally was conceived as a complete history of Payne County newspapers from Oklahoma's territorial days to 1941, when the News and Press merged. The aforementioned problem--so many publications surfacing for such brief periods of time--precluded the original plan and caused the writer to alter the study's scope.

Because the News-Press, whose genesis encompassed several of those short-lived newspapers, offered an expansive history in itself, it was decided that the research should be focused upon those elements that evolved to produce today's Stillwater daily newspaper. A protracted look at the News-Press' history does, in fact, include many elements that would have been found in a broader historical review.

Scope of the Study

Those developments that transformed early-day Payne County newspapers into important instruments of journalism followed closely the growth of American journalism itself. Therefore, this account should be

perceived as more than an isolated history.

An example is the way local newspapers evolved from simple party circulars to earnest, objective publications intended to serve a growing public's thirst for news. At the forefront of this transition was John P. Hinkel,* who, accordingly, is included in this thesis at its beginning. Hinkel was just the first, however, and other visionaries would follow his lead.

Prominent in the study is a continuing description of page designs endemic to the different eras. Although at times this may seem laborious, it reflects journalism history at work. Hopefully, those who turn to this thesis will be able to discern a trend in page designs--a sort of trial and error process used by various publishers to perfect more readable newspapers. These efforts along the way included rudimentary cartoons, serials, book reviews, shopping and gardening tips, etc. And, eventually, these publications realized the overriding need for better national and international coverage, and they soon began integrating these stories into the daily news budget.

The thesis attempts to define these and other steps that were taken in that sequential process of trial and error. As mentioned earlier, many of the early-day newspapers would not, because of money shortages or little imagination, be able to keep step with competitors and would fall by the wayside. Many would be forced to merge with others, thus the prolific interchanging and consolidating of mastheads, which may at times prove confusing to the thesis reader.

*Hinkel's name appears in various sources as Hinkle, Hinkell, and Hinkel. The latter was the family preference.

However, if some type of geneological flow chart were devised for the News-Press, readers would see a discernible pattern emerge--an ebb and flow set of circumstances that left a rich journalistic legacy in Stillwater and Payne County. Hopefully, this is more than an academic thesis; it should be a story of invention as well as invective, and of pride and accomplishment. The story of area journalism is part of the colorful story of people and events that helped make this section of the nation what it is today.

CHAPTER II

JOHN P. HINKEL: PAYNE COUNTY VISIONARY

As capriciously conceived as the ubiquitous winds that swept over this southwestern land, journalism in Payne County's early days was only as permanent as the conditions that spawned it--conditions predicated on personal whims, political expediency and, perhaps, an existential need to assert one's self during these tumultuous days.

Payne County, at the vortex of Oklahoma's unique catharsis from Indian Territory to the forty-sixth state, lends scholars and laymen alike an intriguing microcosm of journalistic growth that paralleled that of the state itself. Indeed, before the advent of statehood in 1907 there were at least 50 newspapers started in the county, some lasting no more than a matter of weeks.¹

For the purpose of this study the writer will direct his attention primarily toward the several predecessors of the newspaper casually tossed onto Stillwater porches today: the Stillwater News-Press. For an illuminating review of Payne County's journalistic highlights, one need only look into the annals of this contemporary afternoon daily; there lies the mainstream of county newspaper development.

Hinkel and the Perkins Journal

If one person could be singled out as the precursor of newspaper development in and around Payne County, it would have to be John Painter

Hinkel. Although he certainly did not initiate newspaper journalism in the county (at the time of his arrival there already was a measurably successful publication in Stillwater in the form of the Gazette, owned by Charles F. Neerman),² his visionary approach to newspaper purpose inexorably proved to be the cornerstone of journalism as we know it in Payne County today.³

Born in 1861 in New York, Hinkel's life was one of self-sufficiency and calculated opportunism--those traits that later would mark his rise to journalistic leadership in the county.⁴ By his twelfth birthday Hinkel already was left to his own devices, his parents having died of illnesses not recorded.⁵ In 1877, at the age of 16, he moved to Elmira, New York, where he became an apprentice printer. Later he held positions on several large eastern newspapers and in the government printing office, followed by stops at the Sioux City Journal and newspapers in Colorado and Minnesota. Expertise gained in the process would later manifest itself in his Payne County newspapers.

Hinkel married Nell Bowdlear in 1889 while employed at a Minneapolis printing company.⁶ Within two years the couple had decided it was time to seek new vistas. They decided to participate in the Iowa-Sac and Fox Reservation land run scheduled in Oklahoma Territory for September 22, 1891.⁷

Guy Logsdon, who wrote a biographical sketch of Hinkel for The War Chief in 1973, stated that Hinkel staked his claim about four miles south of Perkins. Soon thereafter, Logsdon wrote, Hinkel borrowed \$50 and purchased a printing press.⁸ By early 1892 Hinkel had established the Perkins Journal, which Logsdon described as the first newspaper in what is now Payne County.⁹ However, evidence presented in William

Montgomery's 1951 study of area journalism suggests that by 1889 there already were at least two newspapers being published in Stillwater--Dan W. Murphy's Stillwater Gazette, established November 10, 1889, and the Oklahoma Standard, also started in 1889.¹⁰

At any rate, the Perkins Journal was one of the county's earliest journalistic efforts. Hinkel had purchased his type and press from A. John "Jack" Show, one of the founders of the Sapulpa Light in 1896, who briefly had contemplated establishing a newspaper at Payne Center, then thought to be the county seat. For undisclosed reasons Show decided not to publish the newspaper, and Payne Center subsequently died of natural causes.¹¹

Hinkel's Journal was a 16 by 22 Republican paper issued weekly on Thursdays. Volumn I, Number 3 of January 21, 1892, is the first issue of the Journal filed at the State Historical Society in Oklahoma City. Records show there was a subscription price of one dollar per year. This issue was a four-page, six-column paper boosting the town by printing: "Remember your local paper is the greatest factor in building up home interest."¹²

Scattered ads throughout the paper totalled about one page, local gossip and policy composed one page, one and a half pages were news and the editor's comments, and personal notes filled the rest of the paper. Hinkel was editor as well as publisher. He apparently was a good promoter and sincerely believed that Perkins would be one of the territory's leading cities. On January 28 he wrote: "Don't you observe the rapid growth of your town? It is three times as big as it was a year ago. Property evaluations have doubled and at the end of the present year will probably double again."¹³

Hinkel apparently believed in "self-help" and educational content for the territory's pioneers, for he began running shorthand lessons on the front page.¹⁴

A front-page editorial February 25, 1893, called attention to the fact that Perkins had grown so much that a brick jail was needed. A "house" ad* stated that the Perkins Journal was equipped to do all sorts of job printing from milk tickets to posters.¹⁵

A regular column, "News Briefs," was changed to "Territorial News" and became of greater local interest; the column earlier had covered national as well as local events. On March 10 the Journal stated, "Perkins is the first [best] townsite in the territory bar none."¹⁶ And, as far as records can be studied, the statement also was literally correct in pronouncing Perkins the first township laid out and occupied.

On May 26, the first line illustration was used on the front page. It was during this time also that the Journal reported there were forty papers in the territory.¹⁷ On August 18, four pages of ready-print** were used in the inside of the Journal and on November 17 of the same year display advertising was published on page one.¹⁸

The complete make-up of the Journal was changed on December 8, 1892. All national news was taken off the front page and printed on page five and the editorial views were more peaceful than they had ever been. During this first year of publication a four-page Christmas supplement was issued at no extra cost to the subscriber. The rules and regulations concerning the opening of the Cherokee Strip were published

*An advertisement promoting the Journal and its services.

**Pre-printed and pre-cut sheets made up largely of non-timely features and sold to small weekly papers.

in the August 24, 1893, issue of the Journal.¹⁹

During the year 1894 more illustrations appeared in the newspaper and a regular four-page ready-print was used inside. In 1895 the Journal's masthead read: "Official city paper."²⁰

Also in 1895 the paper underwent further change, moving press day from Thursday to Friday. Physical changes included the addition of a seventh column (from the outset it had maintained six) and depth was increased from 22 to 24 inches.²¹ In addition, more than half of the front page was used for advertising. In March, serial stories--mostly adventure and romance fiction--were beginning to jump from the inside to the front page.

During 1897 ads began moving off the front page. On October 22, 1897, for reasons unknown, the spelling of Hinkel's last name on the masthead changed from Hinkel to Hinkle. After a few weeks, however, the paper returned to the original spelling.²² It may have been a slowly discovered typographical error.

Hinkel Moves On

Logsdon records that in 1900 Hinkel sold his farm in Perkins and moved to Ripley, where his son John W. Hinkel was in school. The following notice appeared in the May 10, 1901, issue of the Journal:

By reason of my absence from Perkins, I hereto place my subscriptions and other accounts due the Perkins Journal to April 1, 1901, in the hands of James Noll, who is authorized to collect the same and receipt therefore. All those who are indebted to the paper will please call at the office in the rear of Payne County Bank and make settlement.²³

At this time the Journal, which had a circulation of 1,200, came under the editorship of John P. Hickam, a North Carolinian educated in

Tennessee, who was in the process of purchasing the paper from Hinkel. Hickam also purchased the Perkins Tribune, a weekly established about 1889 by C. A. Strickland.²⁴

By 1902 Hickam, a strong advocate of statehood, was offering the combined Journal and Tribune as well as a new twice-a-week Globe Democrat for \$1.65 per year if paid in advance. The Globe was advertised as the strongest Republican paper in the West and "no one who wishes to keep well up with the campaigns of 1902 can afford to miss this offer."²⁵

The Ripley Adventure

John P. Hinkel seemed a permanent fixture in Perkins. Across the Cimarron River the town was growing nicely, and his family was well established on "Hinkel Heights," overlooking the river. He became postmaster and enrolling clerk for the territorial legislature while continuing his roles as printer, editor and publisher.²⁶

Cunningham notes that

He had just produced a sparkling little booklet about the virtues of Perkins, which indicated that he felt as secure here as the river itself. This booklet read, in part, as follows:

'Perkins might well be called the "Italy of America." . . .

'Perkins is a land of rain and pleasant sunshine. The country is so diversified in its makeup that scarcely any enterprise need seek long to find exactly the location and necessary elements suited to the emergency.

'One can scarcely refrain from believing that infinite wisdom really prevailed to keep so grand a country reserved to a day when wisdom, wealth, and good society are really moving toward the west to find a home in a genial clime.'²⁷

Not only was this passage typical of the "flowery" prose of the day, but it was the kind of boosterism most frontier editors engaged in. They saw themselves as community builders as well as chroniclers of the very growth they boosted.

But Hinkel was part of the restlessness that the "go west" fever had produced in the last two decades of the 1800s. And now another town on the river beckoned. It was a train whistle from across the Cimarron--a river the train could not hurdle in the Perkins vicinity--that banished all the lovely rhetoric from the editor's mind. He followed the tracks to Ripley.²⁸

No doubt John P. Hinkel saw in Ripley a more promising future. The railroads were a must for western growth, and Ripley not only was a stop on the line, but a complex of tracks stretched out in every direction from the community, where a railroad bridge was pushed across the river. Before the end of the year, trains were running on a regular schedule between Ripley and the county seat in Stillwater.²⁹ Not only that, but Hinkel still had his political connections, and it was likely he would use them as he had in Perkins.

Hinkel, after moving his family to Ripley, established the Ripley Times in 1900. He built what was described as a palatial home almost immediately, with Nell and their two sons, John and William, sharing the aura of community leadership.

. . .Ripley soon got a post office, and the new editor was the logical choice for postmaster. The Times grew along with Ripley, and by the end of six months it boasted circulation of 1,200, not bad in any league, especially considering that the town itself had only 1,500 inhabitants.

The editor. . .expected to make his stay a lengthy one. He added to his equipment from time to time, boasting that he had a "power printing plant, fast presses, and new type."

In 1903 the village attracted nationwide attention when it installed a dial telephone system, which worked. The town was decades ahead of the rest of the state with this innovation.³⁰

Ripley was a railroad center of sorts, but it also was a good agricultural town. Three large ranches developed nearby. The Coyle ranch was on the east; the Tom Berry Ranch was to the north, and the Moorehead ranch to the northwest.³¹

All three had substantial staffs, and all three patronized the businesses in Ripley. The Berry ranch specialized in livestock, while the Coyle and Moorehead ranches were predominantly cotton.

John Schulze opened a general store in 1900 which attracted trade from all directions. . .The large store at Ripley served the total trade.³²

Just as the railroads had led Hinkel to Ripley, so the automobile and the development of highways led him away from it. The town had reached its growth limit, and despite the promotional efforts of Hinkel and local merchants, more and more cars were going out of Ripley to the larger towns in the area, an obvious problem for Ripley entrepreneurs.

While Ripley had seemed to have everything that makes a town "a delightful place to live"--even the younger generations agreed--the trade began to slip away and Ripley went into eclipse, a leading resident of that period recalled.³³

Cunningham points out that

Publisher Hinkel did not stay to see the eclipse, not even the money panic of 1907 that left a mark in all midwestern towns. He heard about a newspaper being for sale in Stillwater, and got in touch with an old friend back east, Edwin H. Brown, who was an editor. After exchanging a few letters, Brown came to Stillwater to examine the possibilities.

Charlie Neerman, who came to Stillwater with the opening of the Cherokee Outlet in 1893, had a hand in a variety of things, including the post office, and agreed to sell the Stillwater Gazette to Hinkel and Brown.³⁴

Hinkel had cast a longing eye at the county seat as a potential newspaper market and on May 5, 1904, after working out details with Brown, purchased half interest in the Stillwater Gazette.³⁵ He subsequently sold his Ripley newspaper and brought his family to Stillwater where he became business manager of the then Populist-oriented Gazette. Brown, who owned the remaining interest in the paper, continued serving as editor.

Hinkel's greatest accomplishments as an early-day Payne County publisher would grow out of his interest in the Gazette, and the sister newspapers it would spawn under his guidance.

FOOTNOTES

¹Carolyn Thomas Foreman, Oklahoma Imprints, 1835-1907, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma, 1936, page 11.

²W. P. Montgomery, "The Stillwater Gazette," (Unpublished Report, Media Resources Center, School of Journalism, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, 1951).

³W. P. Montgomery, page 3.

⁴W. P. Montgomery, page 17.

⁵Guy Logsdon, "John Hinkel: Printer, Publisher and Bookman," The Star Chief of the Indian Territorial Posse of Oklahoma Westerners, Vol. 7, no. 2, September 1973, pp. 1, 3-7.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Frank D. Northup, Letter to W. P. Montgomery on May 5, 1951, "The Stillwater Gazette," (Unpublished Report, Media Resources Center, School of Journalism, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, 1951).

¹¹Mary Helen Montgomery, "The Perkins Journal," (Unpublished Report, Media Resources Center, School of Journalism, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, 1952).

¹²Perkins Journal (January 21, 1892), page 1, on file at Oklahoma State Historical Society Library, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

¹³Perkins Journal (January 23, 1892).

¹⁴Perkins Journal (February 25, 1893).

¹⁵Perkins Journal (February 25, 1893).

¹⁶Perkins Journal (March 10, 1893).

¹⁷Perkins Journal (May 26, 1893).

- ¹⁸Perkins Journal (August 18, 1893).
- ¹⁹Perkins Journal (August 24, 1893).
- ²⁰Perkins Journal (February 20, 1895).
- ²¹Perkins Journal, Study of 1895 issues.
- ²²Perkins Journal (October 22, 1897).
- ²³Guy Logsdon, "John Hinkel: Printer, Publisher and Bookman," The Far Chief of the Indian Territorial Posse of Oklahoma Westerners, Vol. 7, No. 2, September 1973, pp. 1, 3-7.
- ²⁴Mary Helen Montgomery, page 21.
- ²⁵Mary Helen Montgomery, page 23.
- ²⁶Robert Cunningham, Stillwater News-Press, January 25, 1971.
- ²⁷*Ibid.*
- ²⁸*Ibid.*
- ²⁹*Ibid.*
- ³⁰*Ibid.*
- ³¹*Ibid.*
- ³²*Ibid.*
- ³³*Ibid.*
- ³⁴*Ibid.*
- ³⁵W. P. Montgomery, page 20.

CHAPTER III

THE STILLWATER GAZETTE'S BEGINNINGS

The Stillwater Gazette was founded in the raw, young days following the 1899 opening of "Old Oklahoma" for settlement. The paper was established November 10, 1889.¹ As it appeared originally, the Gazette measured 18 by 24 inches and contained four pages with seven columns each. It was published Fridays with a yearly subscription rate of 1.25.²

In 1891, the Gazette raised its price to \$1.50 per year and the format was about the same as the modern tabloid, five 13-pica columns to the page, 16 inches deep.³ Occasionally there were eight pages but it was usually made up of only four, two of which were ready-print.

Headlines usually were barlines* with inverted pyramid decks. On the smaller stories, the barlines often stood alone. The ready-print sections of the paper were made up of miscellaneous matter including features, fiction and "telegraphic" dispatches, and were entertaining as well as typographically attractive. Datelines on the telegraphic copy were printed in the Gazette's own particular style of type--or a very similar one--in capitals and small capitals.⁴

*A "barline" was a single-line head, sometimes standing alone and sometimes serving as the top "deck" of a multi-deck headline. Headline writers often sought to achieve a full-line head with the barline, with no extra space on either side of the line.

Advertising during this period was of the same type that prevailed in most country weeklies in the 1890s. It contained a large proportion of patent medicine advertising, featured black, blaring type displays in core ads, and made little artistic use of white space. Editorially, the Gazette was, as it continued to be for more than half a century, a staunchly Republican paper and the bound files bear out the statement of contemporary printer-journalist, Frank D. Northup, that publisher Dan . Murphy was a "vitriolic writer inclined to hate folks he didn't agree with."⁵

News in Oklahoma Territory

News was plentiful in the young territory and a considerable amount of it dealt with violence. During early 1892 it was not uncommon to see news supplement inserted in the paper, sometimes containing general news and reader advertising, sometimes political comment or propaganda. The type pages of these inserts measured 6 by 9 inches, consisted of three columns, and were printed on one or both sides, according to demand.

The issue of April 1, 1892, lists J. E. Sater and J. W. Moats on the masthead. Carolyn Foreman, in her book Oklahoma Imprints, 1835-1907, stated that Sater was the editor. Neither of the men was a printer by trade.⁶ Sater's name disappeared from the Gazette masthead November 2, 1892, leaving Moats as editor and publisher. By June 2, 1893, Charles M. Becker's name was listed on the masthead as publisher.⁷

Three years after the Gazette began publication, the politically independent Oklahoma Eagle was started in Stillwater. The year was 1892.

The December 29, 1893, issue of the Eagle, published by the Eagle Publishing Co., ran two, two-column by full-page-length advertisements urging readers to subscribe to the Eagle, "Payne County's Best Newspaper."⁸ Those persons who followed this directive soon received, actually, two papers for the price of one, because the Eagle and Gazette are consolidated into the Eagle-Gazette January 1, 1894.

The Eagle had been a Populist paper until about two or three months before its consolidation with the Gazette. At that time it was purchased by a syndicate of which Northup was a member. Its politics shifted to Republican, and Northup became editor. He was 23 years old, and had nine years of newspaper experience and already had edited two newspapers, one in Oklahoma.⁹

The Eagle-Gazette

News style of the Eagle-Gazette was not greatly different from that of the old Gazette; it editorialized in its news columns to a certain extent, and put more emphasis on what would be considered the "play" stories to make them more easily distinguishable from the others. Sometimes it reached a considerable degree of vituperation. This headline appeared on Page 1 on January 26, 1894:

DALTONS VISIT PAWNEE

THEY GIVE THE CASHIER A FREE
RIDE BUT GET ONLY A
HUNDRED DOLLARS

*A newspaper term referring to a more favorable page position and a stronger typographical treatment for the most important stories.

cked on at the end of the story was the following comment:

Where, oh where, is Marshal Nix and his brave (?) deputies? They seem to be on hand when there is some inoffensive Indian to run in for selling his red brother a drink of whiskey, but conspicuous for their absence when they are needed. Nix should get a move on himself and either surrender the United States to this gang, as he wants to do, or organize immediately and lose no time in running them down.¹⁰

On May 10, 1894, the paper changed from Friday to Thursday publication and stayed with that day until February 7, 1905. A week later, May 17, the masthead listed, under Eagle-Gazette Publishing Co., Becker as associate editor and Northup as editor and manager.

Though Northup's name disappeared from the masthead (as did his partner's) when he sold his interest in the paper to his successors June 14, 1894, he remained fairly active in editing the paper for some time. After his return from the Spanish-American War in 1899 he was once again editor of the Gazette and its companion paper, the Daily Gazette, established in 1900 and published every evening except Sundays, for a time. During this period Northup also was employed by Oklahoma . & M. College, where he set up the college print shop and served as first superintendent of printing.¹¹

Neerman Emerges as Gazette Leader

The acquisition June 14, 1894, of a part ownership in the Eagle-Gazette by Charles F. Neerman was the beginning of the paper's second-longest period under one ownership. Neerman appeared in the masthead as editor on that date and Joe A. Litsinger was listed as publisher. Litsinger's association with the Gazette ended 11 months later.

Neerman was a typographical-minded, politically-crusading editor.

his tenure, especially in the Gazette's early years, was one of the most colorful in the paper's history.¹² He was fond of large, black headlines and was not hesitant about speaking of his political opponents in strong terms. Politics, of course, remained Republican and there was no change in format for some months after the Neerman-Litsinger partnership took over the paper. Neerman's partiality to scare headlines, however, was ever more evident that in the story of his expose of Populist affiliations with the secret Sicilian society, Mafia, in the September 4, 1894, issue. It was, so far as this writer could tell, the biggest political expose the paper ever published. The headline, in bold-face roman old-style, read as follows:

THAT SECRET OATH-BOUND ORGANIZATION

THE RULING POWER OF THE POPULIST PARTY, AND ITS
CANDIDATES ARE NEARLY ALL MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY

THIS MODERN ANARCHISTIC MAFIA

IN A MOST PROSPEROUS CONDITION IN THIS COUNTRY. ITS PLOT, OATH
AND SCHEMES GIVEN AWAY BY ONE OF ITS TRUSTED MEMBERS WHO
HAS SEEN ALL AND KNOWS WHEREOF HE SPEAKS

The headline was set in two-column measure, a rather rare occurrence at the time, and was four or five inches deep. The lead story, also set 26 pica ems, marked an even more pronounced departure from the norm.¹³

Really radical changes came over the Gazette with the issue of February 21, 1895, however, when Litsinger's name disappeared from the masthead and the name of the paper became the Stillwater Gazette again. The format with this issue was enlarged to six columns by 20 inches and

the number of pages was reduced to four.

Circulation at that time is not definitely known, but Northup, noted in a 1951 article, estimated that it ranged between 1,200 and 1,600 a week during his latter term as editor. Subscriptions were \$1.00 per year, paid in advance, and "house" ads abounded with special offers.¹⁴

April 19, 1900, the Gazette reverted to the old five-column format again and resumed printing eight pages. About a month later a unique eighth page was added, printed on only one side. Early in 1902 the paper looked even better. Headlines became more active (not so inclined to be labels) and fewer decks were used. The January 9, 1902, issue even came out with a practically unprecedented ad-free front page, but this was made up for in the January 23 and January 30 editions, which were issued with full-page ads on Page 1.

On October 9, 1902, the paper had started one of its several campaigns against Democratic officials in Payne County with a series of articles purportedly by one John Podunk. These were set two-column measure on the front page and were labeled "A Talk About Taxes." Emphasis within the stories was obtained by setting certain statements in italic type.¹⁵

On March 31, 1904, the first bulletin-type news story in the Gazette appeared. It was a two inch, one-column box at the top of the column and announced the arrival of the equipment for the Stillwater Gas and Oil Co.'s well. Fourteen-point lightface capitals were used.

Hinkel Moves to Stillwater

The coming May 5, 1904, of Hinkel into Stillwater journalism was

ident in the paper's make-up as it switched back to the six-column format, maintaining its eight pages. It was back on the five-column format July 20, however, and remained that way until February of the following year. The Gazette went back to a six-column format and began bi-weekly publication February 7, 1905.¹⁶

During all these changes in format and publication days, the zette seemed to improve considerably. This was especially noticable news coverage after Hinkel's buying into the paper. He was a skilled journalist, long experienced in both the editorial and type-setting ends of the business. He was to be the man who had the longest affiliation (1904-1941) with the Gazette.

FOOTNOTES

¹W. P. Montgomery, "The Stillwater Gazette," (Unpublished Report, Media Resources Center, School of Journalism, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, 1951).

²W. P. Montgomery, page 2.

³W. P. Montgomery. Interview with John W. Hinkel, April 14, 1951, Stillwater, Oklahoma, "The Stillwater Gazette," (Unpublished Report, Media Resources Center, School of Journalism, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, 1951).

⁴W. P. Montgomery, page 3.

⁵Carolyn Thomas Foreman, Oklahoma Imprints, 1835-1907, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma, 1936, page 411.

⁶Stillwater Gazette (April 1, 1892).

⁷Stillwater Gazette (June 1, 1893).

⁸Oklahoma Eagle (December 19, 1893).

⁹W. P. Montgomery, page 6.

¹⁰Eagle-Gazette (January 26, 1894).

¹¹Frank D. Northup. Letter to W. P. Montgomery on May 5, 1951, "The Stillwater Gazette," (Unpublished Report, Media Resources Center, School of Journalism, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, 1951).

¹²Jack Messall, "Frank D. Northup," (Unpublished Report, Media Resources Center, School of Journalism, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, 1949).

¹³Eagle-Gazette (September 4, 1894).

¹⁴Frank D. Northup. Letter to W. P. Montgomery on May 5, 1951, "The Stillwater Gazette," (Unpublished Report, Media Resources Center, School of Journalism, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, 1951).

¹⁵W. P. Montgomery, page 8.

¹⁶Guy Logsdon, "John Hinkel: Printer, Publisher and Booksman," The War Chief of the Indian Territorial Posse of Oklahoma Westerners, Vol. 7, No. 2, September 1973, pp. 1, 3-7.

CHAPTER IV

HINKEL AND BROWN STABILIZE THE GAZETTE

The 22-year partnership of John P. Hinkel and Edwin H. Brown was the longest period the Gazette had ever had under one ownership. It began in March 6, 1906, when the names of Hinkel and Brown--later to become household words in Stillwater and Payne County--replaced Gazette Printing and Publishing Co. on the masthead.¹

Weekly Publication Established

That also was the paper's last semi-weekly edition. It returned to the eight-page weekly format, with the only important change being that it was published regularly on Friday rather than on Thursday, which had been publication day before the semi-weekly period.² Circulation was about 1,500.

Hinkel and Brown had been boyhood friends. They had worked together as apprentices in Elmira, New York, and later were partners in a newspaper venture at Minneapolis, Minnesota.³ When Brown came into the azette partnership, buying Neerman's interest, Hinkel printed an editorial from which the following is an excerpt:

Mr. Edwin H. Brown, for more than a quarter of a century engaged in the newspaper business at Sioux City, Ia., has taken a half interest in The Gazette, and will be actively concerned in the editorial conduct of this paper. Mr. Brown brings experience and energy to the task. It is the ambition and hope of the management to make The Gazette one of the best,

newsiest and most reliable papers in Oklahoma, a paper worth the price and more than the price--one that people who want all the news of Payne County cannot keep house without. This is the purpose of the editors and publishers, and while they do not expect to accomplish their ambition in a week or a month, they do expect to be able to point to constant improvement. In this they earnestly request the co-operation and help of the people of Payne County.⁴

The politics of the paper stayed the same and were little, if any, less outspoken than before. Chief political irk of the period seems to have been what the editor referred to as the "unconstitutional convention" of 1907. Bitterness was especially aimed at William H. Murray, but other Democrats managed to gather a fair share as well.

Hinkel and Brown proved to be innovative typographers and developed some attractive variations. One of these was a six-column line run over story at the bottom of Page 1, January 3, 1908. The story itself was set indented without column rules, a new approach to news display.⁵

John W. Hinkel, son of John P. Hinkel, said his father and Brown replaced the old Washington press with a Babcock drum cylinder press sometime during these early years, but he was not sure of the period.

Ads were generally less blaring now--though a real old rip-snorter still showed up now and then--and were gradually being dropped from the front page. For monotony-breakers in their straight-matter, the partners started the use of subheads during this period. They were set in small caps, or capitals of a smaller type size, and made the long stories considerably more attractive to the eye. The paper seemed to improve in all respects and it is obvious that it prospered. Ten- or 12-page issues were not uncommon during 1909.

Changes in Perkins

Meanwhile, Hinkel's former paper in Perkins was continuing to operate successfully under the editorship of John Hickam, who was a firm believer in statehood for the territory. When J. E. Sater was a candidate for office all the news space on the front page of the Perkins Journal was devoted to Sater's opinions and his platform.

"Alfalfa Bill" Murray was one of the enemies of the Perkins Journal's editorial beliefs. An editorial entitled, "Is Murray A Double-Crosser?," appeared in the Journal during 1905.⁶

The Payne County Bank at Perkins published the first bank statement to appear in the Journal, showing the bank had assets of \$81,222.27.⁷ In the fall of 1908, italic heads made their appearance in the Journal and two- and three-column headlines were used more freely.

"The Perkins Journal" was the front-page title for the paper while the masthead for the editorial page read "Weekly Journal" or just "The Journal."⁸ Premiums for yearly subscriptions were offered in 1910. The campaign was started in January and offered with every paid subscription a pair of shears and a subscription to the Wichita Weekly Eagle for only .25.⁹

As the year 1910 progressed, editorials more like those run today in local issues appeared. On February 7, 1911, the Journal ran a telegram from J. J. Jones announcing the state capital had been moved to Oklahoma City from Guthrie and that the Oklahoma Supreme Court held Oklahoma City to be the capital.¹⁰

With the issue of March 31, 1911, John P. Hickam ended his editorship of the Perkins Journal. Hickam wrote his readers saying:

That I may devote my entire time to farming and the lecture platform, I have sold the Journal to Dr. T. L. Nobbitt of this city and with this issue my connection with the paper ceases.¹¹

Plans and policies of Dr. Nobbitt concerning the Journal were published in the April 21 issue of the paper. They were:

- (1) Honest enforcement of all laws
- (2) the Journal will be Republican
- (3) the paper will be divided into three departments: advertising, job printing and subscriptions, and
- (4) the Journal would like reader criticism.¹²

Modernization of the Gazette

As the Hickam years ended in Perkins, 11 miles away in Stillwater Hinkel and Brown were continuing their modernization of the Gazette. In 1910 Brown had installed the first linotype machine in Payne County.¹³ It was a Junior model, according to John W. Hinkel, which could only set 8-point slugs, 13 picas long, the standard column width during this period.¹⁴

In 1912 Hinkel purchased the Stillwater Daily Press from George Gelder, who had started the paper three years before as a free-circulation newspaper. It lived for 32 years, 27 of them as free-circulation years, until it was consolidated in 1941 into the present-day Stillwater News-Press. Brown owned no part of the Press.

Also in 1912 the partners started a column of editorial paragraphs under the standing head, "Gazettes." This was to last until the birth of the News-Press in 1941. The same year the policy of always having an index on Page 1 and the standing head "News of the Neighbors" over the

country correspondence were inaugurated. These proved to be equally long-lived.

An intense interest in local government is shown by the fact that the Gazette printed the entire charter of the City of Stillwater in its April 15, 1910, issue. The 1911 volume of N. W. Ayer and Sons' Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals gives the Gazette's circulation as 2,016 to 2,000 for its chief rival, the Advance-Democrat, and 1,200 for the third weekly, the People's Press.¹⁵

Staunch Republican that it had been for 22 years, the Gazette partially broke away in 1912 and supported the Bull Moose candidate, Theodore Roosevelt. It was the first time in its politics-loaded history that the paper hadn't gone straight-down-the-line Republican. The headline it used over the election results was one of the most colorful of the period and is re-printed below:

He-Haw' He-Haw'

Voice of the Democratic Donkey Is Raised in
Song of Victory

Wilson Is Elected President

Partial Results Show He Has an
Overwhelming Majority
Taft Low Man

In July of 1913 the Gazette's first picture of a local news event was printed. It was a halftone of a gusher and was labeled "Payne County's First Oil Well."

Subscriptions were still sought and the partners had ways of promoting them. This was evidenced by their offering a section map of

Payne County "worth two dollars" and a year's subscription to the Gazette for only \$2.50. The ad appeared in the October 3, 1913, issue.

Automobile advertisements started in a big way about 1911 with Overland one of the heaviest of the early space users. Fords were bringing \$440 in 1916 and Maxwells, even "with electric starter and lights," were only \$655.

On January 7, 1916, editor Brown rapped the Oklahoma Publishing Co. in a manner almost reminiscent of "the good old days" before and shortly after the turn of the century. OPUBCO had just bought the Oklahoma City Times and had said it would be politically an independent paper. Brown somewhat vehemently doubted the probability of this, saying the same company's Daily Oklahoman had never been so. While in the mood he took his customary crack at the Democrats, lamenting, meanwhile, the lack of a Republican daily newspaper in the state.¹⁶

June 1, 1917, the paper started carrying the emblem of the Oklahoma Press Association. This was done without editorial comment.

On the news side, the Gazette of the late teens was becoming, by a gradual process, a more localized paper. This process might have been speeded up but for the fact that Hinkel, as publisher of the Daily Press, was using the Hinkel-Brown partnership to print the daily.¹⁷ As was customary, much of the Gazette's news was run first in the Daily Press.

Foreign news, war news, national news (especially political news) and a great deal of "boilerplate" art were used in this period, but local stories increased in proportion to the other types and country correspondence had a healthy, regular expansion.

Ayer's circulation figures at that time showed the Gazette running

neck-and-neck with the Advance-Democrat with 1,700.

By 1926 the chief national advertisers were, possibly, the tobacco companies. P. Lorillard and Co. led the field with its ads on Velvet pipe tobacco and Beech-Nut chewing tobacco. Cigaret advertising didn't appear in any appreciable amount until several years later. Display rates were now up to 25 cents to 40 cents per column inch, depending on position. No special rates were quoted for national advertisers.

Hinkel-Brown Partnership Ends

The masthead of the Gazette changed once more in January, 1928, and started a 13-year stretch reading Hinkel and Sons. The sons were John W. and William S. Hinkel.

Reporting the change in ownership in the now-familiar "Gazettes" column on the editorial page, the editor said:

This issue of The Gazette is the first since Edwin H. Brown's retirement after twenty-two years of editorship. To say that he is missed is expressing it in the most matter-of-fact way. Day by day his absence, this week has been more pronounced--as press day approached.¹⁸

The next issue published letters of tribute to the retiring editor, including one of appreciation from the Stillwater Chamber of Commerce.

March 15, 1929, the editor went out on a limb--which was subsequently cut from under him--by saying: "Hoover is on the job and a prosperous period is ahead. That's enough to make anybody optimistic."¹⁹

It seems probable that the Gazette's new editor, Randle Perdue, came to regret that observation.

FOOTNOTES

¹W. P. Montgomery, "The Stillwater Gazette," (Unpublished Report, Media Resources Center, School of Journalism, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, 1951).

²Ibid.

³Guy Logsdon, "John Hinkel: Printer, Publisher and Booksman," The War Chief of the Indian Territorial Posse of Oklahoma Westerners, Vol. 7, No. 2, September 1973, pp. 1, 3-7

⁴Stillwater Gazette (October 8, 1937), and reprinted in the Stillwater Daily News-Press (April 9, 1943).

⁵The Gazette (January 3, 1908).

⁶Mary Helen Montgomery, "The Perkins Journal," (Unpublished Report, Media Resources Center, School of Journalism, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, 1952).

⁷Mary Helen Montgomery, page 6.

⁸Mary Helen Montgomery, page 7.

⁹Mary Helen Montgomery, page 12.

¹⁰Journal (February 7, 1911).

¹¹Perkins Journal (March 31, 1911).

¹²Perkins Journal (April 21, 1911).

¹³W. P. Montgomery. Interview with J. W. Hinkel, May 13, 1951, Stillwater, Oklahoma, "The Stillwater Gazette," (Unpublished Report, Media Resources Center, School of Journalism, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, 1951).

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵N. W. Ayer and Sons, American Newspaper Annual & Directory Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1911.

¹⁶Gazette (January 7, 1916).

¹⁷W. P. Montgomery, "The Stillwater Gazette," (Unpublished Report, Media Resources Center, School of Journalism, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, 1951).

¹⁸W. P. Montgomery, page 25.

¹⁹The Gazette (March 15, 1929).

CHAPTER V

THE GAZETTE AND THE DAILY PRESS

Randle Perdue, who at 88 is still active as a writer in Stillwater, came to the city in 1911 to attend Oklahoma A. & M. College after a year at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee.

While at Oklahoma A. & M., Perdue served as a news correspondent, with emphasis on athletics, for The Daily Oklahoman, Tulsa World, Dallas News and Associated Press, whose small payments for copy accepted covered his tuition costs. In the summer of 1914 Perdue was hired as sports editor of the Muskogee Daily Phoenix, but in September of 1914 he returned to Stillwater to become executive secretary to Dr. L. L. Lewis, who had been named acting president of A. & M.

Included in Perdue's duties was that of rudimentary public information, thus he became the college's first publicity officer.

Perdue and the Press

In July, 1921, Perdue left the college, after President J. W. Cantwell resigned. Perdue had served about six years as Cantwell's secretary and publicity man.

In the summer of 1921 Perdue went to work as a reporter for the Stillwater Daily Press, becoming editor in 1925.¹ He had been writing a column entitled "Daily Comment" for the Daily Press. In 1928 it was changed to "Over the Spillway," in reference to Boomer Lake's first

overflow.

Perdue remained as editor until January of 1930, when he returned to the college to be director of Service and Information for Dr. Henry J. Bennett, president.*

When Perdue joined the Daily Press in 1921 it was a free distribution paper. He originally was hired as Brown's assistant, and as such was responsible for the hiring of Otis Wile, who would succeed Perdue as the newspaper's editor. The Daily Press and Gazette were then officed at the corner of 7th and Main streets. The Daily Press published five issues a week, ranging in size from two to eight pages. The weekly Gazette consisted of between 12 and 16 pages, and was noted for publishing a wide range of "canned features"--feature-length stories about national and state affairs that were authored by non-local writers.²

Perdue recalls that the Gazette, to which Brown was directing most of his attention, consisted mainly of stories which had already been published in the sister Press. During this time Brown was writing a Republican column for the Gazette.

Brown's Influence on the Papers

During Perdue's tenure at the Daily Press the paper carried a greater volume of ads than did the Gazette, although local news received

*Late in 1931 Perdue entered the insurance profession, after Governor Bill Murray had ordered the publicity job abolished. The depression was deepening, and Gov. Murray considered the position to be too expensive. Perdue spent more than 35 years in insurance, but now is retired.

In 1965 Perdue began writing an outdoors column, "Over the Spillway by the Oldtimer," for the Stillwater News-Press. It is still running three times a week. Some of the material in "Over the Spillway" is

heavy emphasis. Brown considered court news especially important and took it upon himself to cover most court proceedings. Perdue remembers Brown sitting through numerous day-long trials and never taking written notes. Returning to the newspaper office, however, he was able to re-write in print exact testimony through what Perdue describes as total recall.

Brown was characterized as a strong disciplinarian who demanded a very strict, coherent use of the English language. On more than one occasion Brown chided a young reporter for using the word anxious, for example, instead of eager, when that was the proper description. Brown kept on display in the newsroom an obtrusive list of grammatical do's and don'ts.³

Drawing on a population of about 5,000 persons, the Gazette in the mid to late '20s maintained a circulation of about 2,000, while the daily newspaper's circulation was about 2,500. Major advertisers for the daily were Katz, which continues business today, and Bishop Clothing Co.

Through the use of two Linotype machines, the company bolstered its revenues by commercial or "job" printing. The newspapers were published on a wood-based, flat-bed press.

Characteristics of the Papers

Perdue recalls that during his editorship at the Daily Press the

being used in the monthly magazine, Outdoor News, published by the Oklahoma Wildlife Federation, the state affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation. It is headed "Splashes--Over the Spillway," and is credited to the Stillwater paper. Also for Outdoor News, Perdue has been writing "True Tales Retold," his experiences in hunting and fishing since 1902.

most controversial issue covered was debate over converting Boomer Lake to a city reservoir. A bond issue to develop the reservoir was called in 1925, and was opposed by three city leaders--Dr. J. T. Gray, a physician; insurance man Charles Melton, and attorney Freeman Miller. The three supported a less expensive, but less viable, water project on Cow Creek.

The morning after the bond issue was passed by city voters, three tombstones appeared at the corner of 8th and Main streets. Inscribed on the respective tombstones were the names of Gray, Melton and Miller. The Gazette and Daily Press supported the Boomer Lake project in their editorials.

Few photographs were published in the papers then because of the expense of processing halftones. Photographic mats, received by mail, were cast into stereotypes in the backshop of the daily, but the zinc halftones and line etchings that were locked in the forms usually were provided by Standard Engraving Co. of Oklahoma City. Photos and sketches were mailed to the Oklahoma City firm, and engravings then were mailed to the Daily Press office, where pictures normally were published days after the events they depicted. The newspapers employed no full-time photographers, hiring local photographers to provide the service.⁴

By 1928, circulation of the Gazette had dropped to about 1,000 (a figure it held the next year) while the Payne County News, successor to the Democrat, had climbed to about 1,800 and the Daily Press to about 2,450. The economic collapse of 1929 found the Payne County News with 2,200 and the Daily Press with 2,815.⁵

In the early '30s the trend toward conservative makeup continued with completely art-less editions becoming fairly common and two-line,

one-column step or drop-line headlines replacing the old black barlines that had held sway for so many years. During this period Hinkel replaced his Babcock press with a web-perfecting unit.

United Press dispatches appeared in the paper in 1930, although it is evident that they were merely lifted from the Daily Press.

The accent on local news became more pronounced during the early '30s but the scope of the Gazette editorial page remained national. The "Gazettes" column, always sparkling under Brown, continued to be colorful until the paper's termination in 1941, although not so politically loaded as it had been under Hinkel's old partner.

During 1933 the paper ran three-column by six-and-a-half-inch editorial-page cartoons, generally pro-Roosevelt in nature. By 1936, however, the Gazette was off the Roosevelt bandwagon, declaring in the "Gazettes" column: "If the Supreme Court decisions keep coming down the line the Democrats may get the budget balanced, at that."⁶

Brown died October 7, 1937, and the newspaper gave him the most impressive obituary ever given to any local figure in its columns. The paper continued Brown's policy of emphasizing country news, running regularly as many as 31 or 32 separate country correspondence columns. In 1939 it began a country column headed "The Earth Told Me," by Edna Eaton Wilson, who had been writing Falls City and vicinity items for both papers. Her column was full of entertaining, homey items in a chatty, readable style. It was continued after the consolidation of the Hinkel papers with the Payne County News and the Stillwater Daily News in 1941.

Nineteen-forty was a lucrative year for the Hinkel properties, especially the Gazette. The success generally is attributed to an increase in business caused by the war in Europe.

It is interesting to note that when the Gazette and the Daily Press were sold in November, 1941, the flat-bed press installed by Hinkel did not go with the paper. It was sold instead to a newspaper in Elmira, New York, where Hinkel--and the focus of this thesis--began.

FOOTNOTES

¹Randle Perdue, Personal Interview, Stillwater, Oklahoma, September, 1981.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵N. W. Ayer and Sons, Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1929.

⁶The Gazette (June 3, 1933).

CHAPTER VI

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF PAYNE COUNTY NEWSPAPERS

What eventually would become known as the Stillwater News-Press was actually an amalgam of several Payne County newspapers. Hinkel's papers, as described earlier, were basically Republican in editorial philosophy. Newspapers of the era flagrantly supported party goals and ideologies, choosing sides in political battles as effortlessly as school children forming kickball teams. Oklahoma newspapers were no exception.

The News-Press, then, would evolve from newspapers that for more than 50 years had ardently opposed one another's political loyalties. Hinkel's Gazette and Daily Press ostensibly published a Republican perspective on the news. His opposition was the Payne County News and its sister publication, the Stillwater News, which was the end product of many Democratic and Populist newspapers.

The Republican

Although it was simply the Payne County News when it became part of the merger forming the Stillwater News-Press in 1941, this side of the dichotomy had been published under several nameplates since its inception in 1892. Ironically, the paper initially was Republican in nature. Its first name, The Republican, would last only a year. (It should be noted that the News held the distinction nationally of being the

newspaper published under the most names.)¹

The Republican was established September 1, 1892, by S. A. Reese. He edited the publication for a group of "leftist" Republicans who did not follow the politics of the Gazette, the recognized official mouth-piece of the party. Reese was employed on the Gazette prior to the founding of the Republican.² He ran the newspaper with difficulty for one year, then decided to give way to stronger political trends in the field.

The Populist

The strongest of the trends came in the form of the Populist Party. Consequently, the next newspaper in the chain of evolution was appropriately named Payne County Populist. The paper was founded on September 21, 1893,* with S. S. Holcomb listed on the masthead as proprietor. Within days, however, Al D. Krebs was listed as proprietor. In its first issue the paper ran six ads on its seven-column front page. It was a weekly, usually publishing four pages. Chief advertisers were Kansas Bargain Store, Stillwater Pharmacy and Dickerson Bros., purveyors of pianos and organs. Cost of the paper was listed as \$1.60 per year.

On November 17, 1893, the name V. H. Biddison was listed as editor. In a front page article, he wrote:

Having purchased the plant of the Republican, recently known as The Populist, I deem it proper to address you concerning my purpose. . .The paper will support the principles of the

*Oklahoma Imprints lists Sept. 1, 1892, as the founding date. There is confusion, perhaps, because Foreman lists both the Payne County Populist and the Stillwater Populist. It appears she considered them to be different publications.

People's Party without faltering and yet the rank partisanship of the word "Populist" seems to represent men and parties rather than principles. This being the reverse of the faith of the editor the name should be changed.⁵

Despite his concern over the paper's name, Biddison apparently took no action.

Ad rates then were 25 cents an inch per week, with subsequent ads costing 15 cents. Headlines were unassuming in appearance, but used decks as often as possible. A great deal of poetry was used on the inside pages, where as many as five stories would often follow each other in one column. Accounts of national events were reported on the inside pages, receiving little prominence.

L. E. Walker was listed as publisher and editor in the December 15, 1893, issue. An example of Walker's headline style is:

What We Are Coming To If
Present Conditions
Continue

Reports of great suffering in most every state in the Union.

Jake Max, the oldest clothing merchant in Springfield, Mo., has failed. Liabilities about \$20,000.

Want makes criminals. A Chicago man on being refused a bushel of coal for which he could not pay, beat the dealer into insensibility. His family was freezing.

Six Nebraska farmers were sentenced to one year in the penitentiary for theft. Their families were starving and their story is said to have effected the judge and court officer to tears.

By 1894 the Populist had moved all front page ads to the right side, and continued using small, one-column and one-line headlines. Also that year the paper installed on the top left of its front page a

standing drawing of an arm holding an American flag with a dollar bill superimposed on it. Beneath the drawing readers always found the words: "We shall always love the greenback, to it we shall ever be true. To the people, money and the flag. The legal tender and stars of red, white and blue." ⁴

The paper's editorials vigorously attacked the government's bond issue to replenish the gold reserves. The paper wrote in an 1894 editorial:

The Democratic party is engaging in making a big row over its own funeral. Grover Cleveland is as good a gold-bug Republican president as Wall Street wants. More bonds and a bad smell is all that is left of the Cleveland administration. ⁵

The paper's front-page composition did not change in 1895, although ads were now as large as six columns wide and nine inches deep. Little changed until 1900, when The Populist began running eight pages. The standard flag with superimposed dollar bill was removed from the front page that year. Publication day was Friday, with yearly subscriptions listed as \$1.00. Until 1897 the paper had been issued on Thursday.

On July 5, 1900, F. W. and C. W. Wright were listed as publishers and editors of The Populist. The Wright brothers supported William Jennings Bryan for president in their editorials, which began to deal more with national events than local. Indeed, the paper's scope moved closer to national events than had ever been demonstrated by its predecessors.

In the September 27, 1900, issue John A. Frazier wrote a telling account of his journey to Galveston, Texas, following the disastrous hurricane that struck the city that fall:

They do not take time to dig graves, just cover them up. I took a stroll yesterday morning, say one-quarter of a mile, and counted 14 bodies lying in different places. It blew a man 45 miles from Galveston and a woman 40 miles. There are 60 cars of wheat that lay five miles from any railroad track. I could write for a week about⁶ the terrible scene down here and then not half tell it. . .

Stillwater Advance

Beginning with its January 3, 1901, issue, the newspaper became the Stillwater Advance. Under its front page flag the paper maintained the phrase, "Successor to the Payne County Populist." The Wright brothers still were listed as publishers, with few discernible changes in the format. Front page ads, however, were reduced in size, and later removed completely from the front page. The weekly was still published on Thursdays, but had reverted back to four pages a week. Major advertisers were now J. D. Holmes, Palace Meat Market and Hand's Drug Store. The paper was now using six columns, with deck headlines still the rule. Examples are these from the January 3 issue:

Order is Made Perpetual

Titles to Lands in Creek Nation
Must Wait Settlement of
Treaty Now Pending

Wants Statehood and Barnes

One of President Cleveland's Oklahoma
appointees spends a day in
Washington

Front page stories, all one column in length, covered county events and territorial news. A standing front page head was "Territorial

Notes," as was the upper left hand "From Christian Science Reading Room."⁷

John S. Hale was first listed as editor of the Advance on October 3, 1901. Listed as business manager was William J. Vandiver. For a brief period in 1901 the paper experimented with a five-column format, but by 1902 had gone back to six columns. On the front page of the February 6, 1902, issue was a revealing three-column ad placed by The Bankrupt Store. The ad's headline read, "The Sheeneys Set Up a Howl!" The ad copy stated:

When The Bankrupt Store opened up business in the city and commenced selling goods at prices never before known in Stillwater, and that cannot be duplicated here now, we had not been in business 10 days before the Jews began to dicker with city council and actually succeeded in inducing them to pass an ordinance to close our business, and if possible land us in the city bastille. Now, why all the 'Jew fits' and Kat(z)aleptoid convulsions? Can't the Jews meet honest competition?⁸

By March of 1902 the paper was publishing eight pages, promoting itself as the largest circulation paper in the county. Hale's editorials kept a close eye on events in Guthrie that eventually would lead to statehood. Under the editorial page masthead on Page 2 was a regular column of anecdotes about community merchants and leaders of city government. It was during this period also that the Advance first began running complete novels in installments.

By 1905 the Christian Science column on the front page had been removed. The Advance continued its policy of one-column headlines, often with accompanying decks, and began resembling to some degree contemporary newspapers. The March 16, 1905, issue published three stories on the front page dealing with the constitutional convention in Guthrie.

No bylines were used, nor were there front-page ads. Major advertisers included Hand Drugs, Amos and Sons Grocery and John Bishop Clothing Store. Subscription price remained \$1.00 per year.

In early 1905,* the Advance was purchased from Hale by Irvin Owings Diggs and Freeman E. Miller. Both men were listed on the masthead as editors, with Diggs also designated as the paper's business manager. The paper's publishing operation was now listed as the product of the Stillwater Advance Printing and Publishing Co.

One of the first additions to the paper was a Page 3 advice column for women titled, "Mrs. Pinkham's Advice--A Woman Best Understands a Woman's Ills." This may have been paid advertising in the guise of an editorial feature. The March 16, 1905, column began:

An eminent physician says that women are not truthful; they will lie to their physicians. This statement should be qualified; women do tell the truth but not the whole truth, to a male physician. But this is only in regard to those painful and troublesome disorders peculiar to their sex. There can be no more terrible ordeal to a delicate, sensitive refined woman than those questions that are asked, even by her family physician. This is especially the case with unmarried women.

These were colorful days for settlers and their rudimentary newspapers. On the front page of the paper's April 20, 1905, issue the following headline was prominent:

*Contradictory information appears in Oklahoma Imprints (see Appendix A).

A Cushing Man
Offers A Scalp

For A Thousand Dollars
he is ready

Brands Kansas City rival as a
Tenderfoot

The accompanying story began:

Jim Scott of Kansas City has a rival for the job of being scalped by Geronimo at the 101 Ranch during the entertainment of the National Editorial Association in June, and the bidding is becoming lively. . . Horace L. Williams of Cushing says he will let the old Apache war chief lift his scalp each day during the week, providing a new spot can be found each time. . .¹⁰

In its editorials, the Advance continued supporting William Jennings Bryan for president and Adlai E. Stevenson of Illinois for vice president. The paper was now being published on Fridays, usually running four pages in length. Major advertisers were R. L. Steen, Stillwater Marble Works and Bahntge Spot Cash Grocery. During this period the Advance began offering its readers The Commoner, edited by William Jennings Bryan in Lincoln, Nebraska. For \$1.00 per year, readers could receive both weekly newspapers. If the subscriptions were paid in advance, the Advance also offered the New York World three times a week for \$1.75 per year; the St. Louis Republic twice a week for \$1.75 per year; and the Kansas City Times twice a week for \$1.00 per year.

One of the paper's most important accounts was with Katz, which even then was coveted by local papers as a source of rich advertising. Katz first advertised in the Advance in August of 1901.¹¹

Stillwater Democrat

On November 2, 1900, Miller, without Diggs, began publishing a three-times-a-week paper called the Stillwater Democrat. The paper followed closely the editorial policies and format of the Advance. Freeman's newspaper was noted for its large, almost obtrusive ads--some as large as a half-page--but rarely were they seen on the front page. The paper in 1901 was publishing as many as eight five-column pages, with a heavy emphasis on city government. In fact, the upper left-hand column on Page 1 was reserved for news about city councilmen. The Democrat used small, standard type in its headlines, most of which were one line in length. In early 1902, the first banner-style headlines used in Freeman-Diggs publications were published in the Democrat. These headlines were always one line, reaching across the full five columns.

It should be noted that the Advance and Democrat were sister papers, with a close political relationship based on vestiges of the Populist movement. Because of their political ideologies, the two papers were in direct competition with Hinkel's Gazette.

By 1903 the Democrat was running numerous full-page ads on its inside pages, the most notable being an ad placed by Sam Miller's Dry Goods Store. Miller's ad ran at least once a week. The paper was general interest in nature and, like the Advance, kept a close editorial eye on matters that might affect statehood. In its January 22, 1903, issue, the Democrat ran a story about Marconi's telegraph system under the following headline:

Talk about ancient Seven Wonders
of the World!
How about Wireless Telegraphy?

In that same issue the paper called on legislators to investigate A. & M. College's board of regents, which had included no Democrat since 1897. The paper charged that the Republican board had "dismissed Democratic professors from the college and filled their places with Republicans in every instance."¹²

During 1903 the Democrat always reserved its top left, front page column for local news. Above the story appeared this standing type:

The National Bank of Commerce of Stillwater, Okla.

Paid up Capital \$25,000. Surplus and Profits
\$4,500. Frank J. Wikoff, President.

An example of an early Democrat story is provided by this excerpt from a front page account published August 13, 1903:

This morning while Under Sheriff Mode Gassoway, Deputy Clingpeel and W. B. Selph were at work fixing the window that let the negro, Lenzy Williams, out. Mr. Gassoway accidentally struck W. B. Selph over the heart and nearly killed him, two doctors have been with him all day.¹³

The Daily Democrat

In 1904, in addition to the Advance and Stillwater Democrat, there was a Daily Democrat being published by I. O. Diggs and John S. Hale. Diggs, therefore, was co-owner with Miller of the Advance, and co-owner with Hale of the Daily Democrat. Miller, as well as owning 50 percent of the Advance, was owner and publisher of the Stillwater Democrat.

The Daily Democrat, published on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, was

four pages in length, set in five columns. Its advertisers were the same as those in the Advance. The Daily Democrat, in fact, provided much of what was being published in the Advance. In its March 24, 1904, issue, the paper, under a single column headline, wrote:

Republican members of the subcommittee of the house territorial committee today completed the draft of the bill uniting Oklahoma and Indian Territory into one state, to become effective March 4, 1906.¹⁴

The paper actively supported statehood and openly encouraged President Theodore Roosevelt to appropriate Indian lands. One front page headline in 1904 proclaimed:

More Indian Land
For the White Man's Taxes

The Otoe and Ponca Reservations Opened
to Civilization--Temporary Government
Until Election Time

A Rich and Fertile Land of Plenty

The Stillwater Democrat, previously a three-times-a-week paper, became a weekly in 1904. The Daily Democrat, published by Diggs and Hale, was using front page ads in 1904. Serials, which would become a standard feature in all the early newspapers, first appeared in the Daily Democrat in 1904, placed at the top of Page 2. The paper that year also included a section on women's fashions as well as "Hints to Housewives." Poetry, submitted by local residents, was featured throughout the paper. There were no pictures then, but drawings and cartoons were interspersed throughout the inside pages.

The Daily Democrat employed a continuing column on its Page 3,

headlined "Around The Camp Fire." The column dealt mostly with military news. It was always one column long, running the entire length of the page. In its June 14, 1906, issue, the Daily Democrat announced final statehood in the following headline:

Statehood at Last
Oklahoma and Indian Territory
Made One Great State

Foraker and the Democrats Did
The Work

Also on that front page was an insert by county officials headlined, "Taxable Property." The story stated that total taxable property in Stillwater was valued at \$1.1 million, with value of assessed lands placed at \$1.6 million. The value of the town and city lots was said to be \$460,339.¹⁵

The Advance-Democrat

In September of 1905, the Advance and Daily Democrat merged. The new paper was a weekly, running eight six-column pages. Diggs and Freeman Miller were listed as publishers and editors. The newspaper was published each Thursday. There then were two ostensibly Democratic newspapers in Stillwater, the new Advance-Democrat and the Stillwater Democrat, still being published by Miller. Both were weekly publications. The Stillwater Democrat, in part because Miller wanted to run for a legislative office, ceased publication in early 1906.

The Advance-Democrat, soon to be the sole Democratic survivor of the convoluted chain of publications, initially was an uninspiring newspaper. Headlines were uniform and docile in effect. Normally two small

ds were run on the front page, usually those for Royal Baking Powder. Major advertisers continued to be Katz Brothers, Miller's Dry Goods and First National Bank. Only the small headlines broke large blocks of gray type on the front page. Occasionally a drawing or mug-type picture, usually of no one locally, would be placed in unassuming positions on the page.

In mid-1906, however, the paper's visual appeal was enhanced. Front page pictures were given greater emphasis, making the Advance-Democrat the first Stillwater newspaper to use rudimentary photographs in an aesthetic manner.

On the front page of the March 7, 1907, issue was one of the first front page pictures ever run in Stillwater. It was a two-column family-album-type photograph of Judge Roy Hoffman, who recently had been endorsed for the U. S. Senate by the Lincoln County Democratic Central Committee.

In 1907 a typical paper was filled with patent medicine ads and serials. The only real news on the inside of the paper came under the heading "Country Correspondence--By Our Rural Reporters." Areas of interest included Payne Center, Willow Springs, Eagle Grove, Barrett Echoe and The Bend.¹⁶

During this period Sam Miller continued running his obtrusive half-page ads. Women's skirts at his store were advertised as costing \$4.98, coats were \$4.98 and wool shawls were on sale for only 24 cents. On the editorial page, Diggs continued attacking Republicans everywhere, but he was not overly caustic in his writing style. The newspaper periodically ran news about A. & M. College on the front page, but did not appear to actively support the school.

The Advance-Democrat, beginning as early as 1905, gave much attention to local school news, making it one of the few early-day newspapers to do so. The paper, which continued to use a six-column format, never jumped stories from the front page to the inside until many years later. During the period 1905-1908, the paper began experimenting with italic decks used beneath roman headlines. It also used bold-face headings on story sections for the first time, as well as front-page photography. Pictures, however, were never of local events but rather of government buildings in Washington, or members of the Roosevelt family, for example. They were cast from mats provided by news syndicates. Occasionally, the "mug" picture of a local leader such as Hoffman was published on the front page.

Subscriptions during this period were \$1.00 per year, if paid in advance. The paper periodically was running multi-column stories. Its inside pages consisted of church news, town topics and the ever-present serials. Also during this period the paper actively sought Miller's election to the House of Representatives. In its October 4, 1906, issue, an editorial, probably written by Diggs, stated:

The Gazette keeps trying to impress upon its readers that Miller has an interest in the Advance-Democrat. We suppose the editor of that great sheet of prevarication has a purpose in making false statements. Likewise the Perkins Press, the editor of which poses as a minister of the gospel. With all due respect for that calling, we wish to say when this editor or preacher (?) says Miller has an interest ⁱⁿ the Advance-Democrat he deliberately and willfully lies.

In the October 11, 1906, edition was a front page story about former editor John Hale, coming under the headline:

John Hale
Is Wanted

Has Gone Leaving His Bond
Men To Hold Sack

Took Daughter With Him

The story described a reward being offered by Hale's bondsmen, W. R. Scott and L. L. Matheson, to anyone finding their client. The story read:

About one year ago Hale went to Muskogee where it is said he dealt in Indian lands, sometimes after returning to Stillwater it is charged that Hale represented to Calvin Warren an aged negro that for \$50 he could secure for him or his wife a head-right by which he could secure for them a title to Indian lands. Through this scheme he succeeded in getting a mortgage on Warren's little home. He sold the mortgage and pocketed the money. On this charge Hale had been arrested and was out on a \$500 bond, but when the day for trial came he could not be found high nor low.

From 1908 to 1911 the paper continued its six-column format, but front-page photos were becoming more popular. The pictures, however, were rarely of recent events or of local citizens. Headlines were small, usually single column, and the Advance-Democrat consisted of eight pages.

In 1917, headlines were much bolder and growing in width to two columns. Normally decks were still employed beneath the main headlines. On its April 5, 1917, edition the newspaper bannered a story about President Wilson's war resolution being adopted by Congress. Subsequent stories, all on the front page, followed closely Wilson's plea for national unity. The first cigaret ads were used in the Advance-Democrat that same year, more often than not advertisements for Chesterfields.

The Velie automobile was advertised for \$1,185, and Roope Motor Co. advertised its tractors for \$1,500.

On November 1, 1918, the subscription price of the Advance-Democrat was raised to \$1.50 until January 1, 1919. The paper pledged to give 50 cents of each subscription to a project to erect a monument to Payne County men who were fighting in the war. In his early 1918 papers Diggs endorsed J. B. A. Robertson for governor. Robertson was running against William Murray.

On July 31, 1919, Jesse W. Hoke's name appeared on the newspaper's masthead as editor and publisher, while Diggs remained as owner. Subscription rates were 40 cents for three months, 75 cents for six months and \$1.50 per year. Ad rates then were 20 cents per inch for display advertising, half a cent per inch for local readers and .01 cent per word for classified ads.

The early 1900s were difficult years for American Negroes, a time when black men and women were relegated to a subservient position. The following July 31, 1919, editorial in the Advance-Democrat was indicative of a paranoia toward blacks that many white Americans experienced:

It is rather strange, isn't it Mr. Northerner, that there aren't more race riots in the South than there are, where there are so many negroes? No, honestly, there is nothing strange about it. The negroes in the South have found just where they belong by the proper handling accorded them by the whites and they have learned that it is disastrous for them to attempt any acts of discord, so common in the North where they have been treated with freedom, with not even common decency and respect demanded of them. It is no wonder that they are now attempting to assert themselves through their riotous acts because they have been given the free rein too much, have been given too little thought by authorities, and have found their opportunity to declare themselves by their natural actions where they are turned loose.¹⁹

On November 3, 1921, W. O. Melton was listed on the masthead as business manager, and Randle Perdue was news editor. However, by February of 1922 Hoke was listed as editor and Edgar Keller as business manager. Subscription rates remained \$1.50 per year, and on the editorial page, usually Page 4, letters and comments from readers were routinely being published. Stories were increasingly directed toward local events and sports.

For the first time in an area newspaper, the Advance-Democrat in 1922 included a society page and a page for children, replete with serial cartoons. Hoke, in his editorials, supported the Ku Klux Klan in Payne County, "but only if it continued to be civic minded." The paper also began running its first weekly cartoon strip, "The Judge--Getting up Exercises," which weekly depicted the Negro in a disparaging light.

In May of 1924 the Advance-Democrat was leased to Ben H. Hester of Chelsea, Oklahoma, formerly publisher of the Chelsea Reporter. Hester replaced Hoke as manager of the plant. The newspaper described Hester as a "Jeffersonian Democrat," saying:

. . .He supported Wilson in the last primary and has always been of the conservative element in the party. His political policies are in line with those of the present editor, which will insure the Democratic party of this country a sane, conservative leadership during his term of office.

Hoke served two years as editor and manager of the paper before Hester took over.

Another Stillwater Democrat

In March of 1925 Diggs sold the Advance-Democrat so that he could become Stillwater's postmaster. The new name of the paper was the

Stillwater Democrat, with Clara A. Otey owning the majority interest. Soon after the change of ownership, however, Arthur S. McEwen and Edmund E. Hadley bought controlling interest, with Hoke retaining a minority interest. The new paper, published Wednesdays, was in six columns. Subscription rates were \$1.50 per year, 75 cents for six months, 50 cents for four months and 40 cents for three months. Editorials were civic in nature, usually dealing with local topics such as road construction.

Front page pictures were becoming a regular feature by this time, although they normally were of famous personalities. Usually, two front page pictures were used. In the upper left hand of the front page, Arthur Brisbane's column appeared. On the editorial page, which no longer appeared to use letters to the editor, a column titled "Appleauce" became a regular feature. It included anecdotes about community happenings.

In 1925, front page stories were being boxed, with varied headline styles used. Usually 12 or 13 stories of varying lengths were run on the front page, while the inside pages were designated for agricultural and neighborhood news, as well as ongoing serials. In its June 26, 1925, issue, the paper lavishly eulogized William Jennings Bryan, who had recently died. In that same issue Ford automobiles were advertised for \$580, and Ford Sedans for \$660.

Although the name change had come earlier, in its July 9, 1925, issue the paper announced that it was the Stillwater Democrat. Irvin E. Hurst was listed as managing editor during 1925. In its September 3, 1925, issue the newspaper marked its 33rd birthday. The front page editorial read:

The Advance-Democrat (forerunner of Stillwater Democrat) was an anomaly. It harked back to the days of populism, a movement largely responsible for bringing Oklahoma A. & M. College to Stillwater. But populism itself was thrown bodily out the door, actually not figuratively speaking, back in 1900, while it was allowed to remain in the name, Democracy took control, but second place in the name. The Stillwater Advance, successor to the Oklahoma Hawk, first published at Payne Center then moved to Stillwater, was an organ of the populist party.

. . . Farther in its background than the Hawk was the Oklahoma Condor. The names were those of birds of prey, it will be noticed. The Democrat, founded to succeed the Oklahoma State Sentinel, followed the principles of the party for which it was named. With fusion, or breakdown of the populist party, a stock company consolidated the two papers, under the presidency of Charles Bush. John Hale, editor of the Advance, thought he controlled the merged papers, but Freeman E. Miller, a stockholder, threw control to I. O. Diggs, editor of the Democrat. Three times Hale ordered E. J. Westbrook, foreman of the plant, to remove one article from the paper, while each time Diggs ordered it replaced. In a spectacular showdown, Hale threw himself on the bed of the press to keep Westbrook from printing the paper, but Bush discharged him and, taking him by the coat collar, ejected him from the shop. B. H. Hester, former editor and owner of the Chelsea Reporter, who leased the Advance-Democrat from last June to March 1, returned to Chelsea after arranging transfer of the paper to its present control. W. A. Jamison was editing the Stillwater Democrat in 1900 when Diggs became part owner and business manager. Diggs was identified with the newspaper from the fall of 1900 until 1925. Diggs, however, was not directly connected with the paper all those years. The business was leased to other parties at various times, and experienced varying degrees of success and failure. Mrs. Diggs edited the paper three years while her husband was Stillwater postmaster. Jesse Hoke joined the Advance-Democrat in 1918 and still retains part ownership. In 1903 the Stillwater Democrat was consolidated with the populist publication, the Advance. F. W. and C. W. Wright, now of California, owned and edited the Advance. When consolidation was perfected, the name was changed to the Advance-Democrat. Miller later published the Advance interest in the paper, and for a year and a half he was editor and Diggs was business manager. Diggs became sole owner in 1905. Between the years 1902 to 1905 the Democrat also was published as a daily. The Hawk, believed to have been the earliest forerunner of the Stillwater Democrat, was founded by E. B. Guthrie, now secretary of the state highway commission. An incident occurring in 1906 which demonstrates the part his newspaper has played in the progress of Payne County is related by Diggs as follows: Saloon keepers at that time, before they could operate were required by law to run notices of application for licenses in the two county

newspapers having the largest circulation. I was editing the Advance-Democrat, which then, as now, was a leading publication, and I refused to publish the notices. The persons desiring such licenses brought suit against me. The case was taken to the supreme court three times, but before a final decision was handed down Oklahoma was admitted to the union as a dry state. Payne County, because of the refusal, already had been dry a year.²⁰

At the time this anniversary editorial was published, the newspaper office was located on Eighth Avenue, west of Main Street. Katz, a major advertiser in 1925, was selling dresses for \$5.95 and men's wool suits for \$22.50. An editorial in the December 31, 1925, issue stated that the city's valuation in 1924 had been \$4 million, but in 1925 building permits totalled \$1 million alone. There were 2,527 students at A. & M. college then.²¹

The paper's editorials that year continued supporting prohibition. It was also during this period that the paper began running for the first time ads for movies at the Camera Theater. Admission was 20 cents for adults and 10 cents for children. Early in 1926 the paper began running a regular front page feature headlined "Know Your Neighbor," written by W. E. Carlson. The feature, which used combined columns in a box, presented news about neighboring communities.

In December of 1927 the masthead listed McEwen as editor and manager, W. E. Carlson as advertising manager and George H. Davis as managing editor. Stockholders were listed as Arthur McEwen, Carlson and Adaline C. McEwen. "Applesauce" had been removed from the editorial page. That page was altered dramatically in September of 1928. Atop the page was a five-column "flag" proclaiming, "Editorial Page of the Tillwater Democrat." The masthead was moved from the upper left to upper right and editorials were more abbreviated, although still written

1 combined columns.²²

Payne County News

The last edition of the Stillwater Democrat was published September 27, 1928. Its front page banner proclaimed a new semi-weekly successor to be called the Payne County News. McEwen continued as publisher and editor, with Carlson remaining as business manager and Ray A. Wright becoming managing editor. The initial announcement about the change stated that there would be a change in policy--that the paper could be strictly independent.²³

The Payne County News was published on Tuesdays and Fridays, and the Advance-Democrat Publishing Co., Inc. became the Stillwater Publishing Co., Inc. The paper's first publication came on October 2, 1928. It used a six-column format, with Lawrence Thompson, later to gain fame as a columnist for the Miami (Florida) Herald, writing most of the news stories and columns. Papers ran between four and eight pages, with little change in front-page layout. Women's news was prevalent, however, as well as added neighborhood news. Subscription rates in 1929 were 1.00 a year, \$2.00 for those living outside the first zone. Most of the editorials in 1929 supported an effort by the city to secure a city manager form of government.

In 1930 the front page was a hodgepodge of national and local stories with a few boxed for added emphasis. It also was in 1930 that Willis F. Allen purchased the newspaper. The masthead listed him as editor and L. W. Evans, his son-in-law, as business manager. Their office was at 114 W. Eighth Ave., from where they published a weekly each Friday. The paper normally published eight pages, and once

gain returned to its purely Democratic philosophies. In 1920 the paper, of course, supported William H. Murray in his gubernatorial race. Editorials, probably authored by Allen, continually opposed all state bond elections and expenditures of public funds, stating that such expenditures should only follow a cut in state income taxes. Other editorials attacked city officials for not doing more to improve city roads.

During 1931 and 1932 the Payne County News depended heavily on county correspondents; in fact, on Page 5 the paper regularly ran a contest through which the week's best correspondent could win token prizes--movie tickets and other gratuities. In its June 10, 1932, editorial the paper took a dig at its main competitor, the Daily Press:

Otis Wile has moved his column, "A Little Daily," from the second page to the first page of the Daily Press. We are sure that Otis' column is always read with interest and does not need a front page position, unless it would be to brighten up the front page.²⁴

In 1932 few front page pictures were used, and the general makeup was, by today's standards, dismal and unattractive. However, the following year italic and universal-style headlines were mixed on the front page, with late bulletins boldfaced and placed in boxes. This greatly enhanced eye appeal. There also were not as many stories being run on the front page and a semblance of white space was employed. Editorials from 1933 to 1935 actively supported President Roosevelt's New Deal. In 1934, the paper began running a front-page column titled, "Courthouse Gossip," which covered in a perfunctory news style those affairs related to the courthouse. Diamond Pharmacy was a major advertiser in 1934, and in its typical two-column, six-inch ads attempted to sell alarm clocks

or \$1.00, lunch for \$1.50 and Dr. LeGear Lice Powder for 25 cents. In its March 2, 1934, issue the paper advertised "Dinner at Eight," showing at the Aggie Theater, starring John Barrymore, Lionel Barrymore, Wallace Beery and Jean Harlow. In that same issue the paper ran an editorial listing the number of lines of display advertising carried by the Payne County News during the last five February editions: 1930, 1,600 inches; 1931, 1,138 inches; 1932, 1,363 inches; 1933, 1,160 inches; and 1934, 1,113 inches.²⁵

Ponca City oil millionaire Lew H. Wentz, a Republican, was attacked in newspaper editorials that year as some sentiment grew for his nomination as a candidate for governor. In his March 30, 1934 editorial, Allen wrote:

Lew Wentz is resorting to the same dog-in-the-manger tactics with his own party in connection with running for governor as he did with Gov. Murray when he was a member of the state highway commission. It would seem that he can't even play fair with his friends.²⁶

In early 1935 Allen was approached by J. L. Crossman, his advertising salesman, about the possibility of expanding the company's advertising base. Crossman apparently felt that Allen's organization was financially stable enough to publish another paper, which would increase advertising lineage and draw greater revenue for the publishing company. But because the competing Daily Press was already a paid daily, Allen and Crossman decided their new paper should not compete for subscriptions. Later that year Allen chose to create a free paper, the Stillwater News, drawing revenues from advertising alone.

Stillwater News

The Stillwater News was first published in November of 1935, going to press on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Allen edited the publication, which usually ran four or six pages, along with its sister publication, the Payne County News. Because it was a subscription paper, the Payne County News remained Allen's legal paper--the only one able to publish legal notices about local transactions. Few copies of the Stillwater News exist because of its short life. In 1940, the two papers were sold by Allen and his son, and the "daily" was altered appreciably before becoming a six-day-a-week publication under the Stillwater Daily News nameplate.

From 1936 to 1940 the Payne County News mirrored closely the newer Stillwater News. Typically, much of the same news appearing in the tri-weekly was "pick up" for the weekly, cutting production costs appreciably. The Stillwater News, obviously, ran the news stories first, but did not offer as many serials or editorials as the weekly. Readers who obtained the free paper at news boxes along city streets found few editorial differences between the Allen publications. Because of tighter deadlines, few photos were run in the tri-weekly, although Allen attempted to fill the void with feature photographs of well-known personalities and military leaders from news agencies and syndicate services. Editorials published on Page 3 of the "daily" were repeated in the weekly. Because it was designed to increase ad revenues, a large percentage of the total content was composed of local ads. Other than the front page, where one or two ads were placed, only about 25 percent of the paper was devoted to news, the remainder providing advertising space.²⁷

The thrust of Allen's journalistic efforts in Stillwater remained embodied in the weekly Payne County News where, because it was the legal paper, local events and subsequent editorials were presented more fully. Of the four local papers--Gazette, Daily Press, Payne County News and Stillwater News--Allen's free tri-weekly was the least read, although its purpose apparently was accomplished.²⁸

In 1935 the Payne County News seemed to bypass national affairs, running few stories that dealt with those events. Only a one-column, two-paragraph story on Page 3 described the September 13, 1935, assassination of Sen. Huey P. Long at Louisiana's capitol in Baton Rouge. The paper continued its heavy emphasis on country correspondence during 1936, and was now running an average of 10 stories on the front page. In mid-1937 the paper went from a six- to eight-column format, with two three-column pictures usually placed on the front page. The paper continued its use of serials, mostly taken from recent novels. In December of 1937 it began running Floyd Gibbons' Adventurers' Club--"accounts of brave deeds by common people"--on page one, column one.²⁹

E. E. "Hook" Johnson, who soon would purchase the paper and be linked in partnership with Irvin Hurst, joined the staff in late December of 1937. Formerly advertising manager of the Blackwell Daily Journal and Cushing Daily Citizen, Johnson became advertising manager for the Payne County News and the Stillwater News, the tri-weekly.

Little change was evident during 1938, although a "Down Main" column, collecting anecdotes about local merchants and city officials, was added on Page 8. Gibbons' Adventurers' Club was moved to Page 3. In January of 1939 the paper ran one of the first valid news pictures ever published by Stillwater newspapers. It was a front page photograph of a

by lying on a stretcher, being attended to by local firemen after having been hit by a car. The related news story had run three days earlier. This picture was selected by the paper's staff as their best photograph of 1939. The photo was made by Robert E. Cunningham.³⁰

Movie ads were more prominent in 1939, usually positioned beside promotional pictures of the actors. During 1940 sports coverage grew in prominence, although there was no sports page per se. Expanded coverage probably was a result of A. & M. College's increasing success in athletic competition, especially in wrestling and basketball. The newspaper was averaging about seven pages and continued experimenting with human-interest columns such as Dale Carnegie's, which mainly drew upon his successful book, How To Win Friends and Influence People.³¹

On its July 5, 1940, front page the paper announced the Payne County News and Stillwater News had been sold by Allen and his son, I. F. Allen Jr., to Johnson and Hurst. Hurst was listed on the masthead as editor and Johnson as business manager. Hurst and Johnson owned both papers nine months before they were sold and subsequently merged with the Daily Press. During their months of ownership, their major efforts were directed toward making a real daily newspaper out of the erstwhile Stillwater News, now known as the Stillwater Daily News. Major changes were made, the most important of these being the vastly stepped up news coverage, for Hurst was a hard-working and aggressive reporter and editor. The Payne County News changed little in format, with the exception of a column titled, "Let's Chat A While," added to the Page 2 editorial page under Hurst's byline. The paper normally published eight pages each Friday. On their front page Hurst and Johnson used fewer three-column headlines than did Allen, with banner headlines usually two lines

length.

The stage had been set for the birth of the Stillwater News-Press, which is the subject of Chapter VII.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹Payne County News (September 5, 1937).
- ²Ibid.
- ³Payne County Populist (November 17, 1893).
- ⁴Populist (March 3, 1894).
- ⁵Populist (March 19, 1894).
- ⁶Populist (September 27, 1900).
- ⁷Stillwater Advance (January 3, 1901).
- ⁸Stillwater Advance (February 6, 1902).
- ⁹Stillwater Advance (March 16, 1905).
- ¹⁰Stillwater Advance (April 20, 1905).
- ¹¹Stillwater Advance (August 1901).
- ¹²Democrat (January 22, 1903).
- ¹³Democrat (August 13, 1903).
- ¹⁴Daily Democrat (March 24, 1904).
- ¹⁵Daily Democrat (June 14, 1906).
- ¹⁶Advance-Democrat, collection of 1907 issues.
- ¹⁷Advance-Democrat (October 4, 1906).
- ¹⁸Advance-Democrat (October 11, 1906).
- ¹⁹Advance-Democrat (July 31, 1919).
- ²⁰Advance-Democrat (September 3, 1925).
- ²¹Advance-Democrat (December 31, 1925).
- ²²Advance-Democrat (September 1928).

²³Stillwater Democrat (September 27, 1928).

²⁴Payne County News (June 10, 1932).

²⁵Payne County News (March 2, 1934).

²⁶Payne County News (March 30, 1934).

²⁷Daily News, 1936-1940 issues.

²⁸E. E. "Hook" Johnson, Personal Interview, Stillwater, Oklahoma,
June 12, 1980.

²⁹Daily News (December 15, 1937).

³⁰Daily News (January 1939).

³¹Ibid.

CHAPTER VII

THE STILLWATER NEWS-PRESS IS BORN

An interesting series of events led to the creation of what is now the Stillwater News-Press. Soon after E. E. Johnson purchased the Allen newspapers, he and his partner, Irvin Hurst, decided to convert the Stillwater News to daily publication. So 1940 saw Stillwater with two dailies: Hinkel's Daily Press and the Johnson-Hurst Daily News. At the time the Allens sold their two Stillwater-based papers, the Daily Press had a circulation of about 3,200. Within a matter of months, however, the new daily would take about 500 readers away from the Press, bringing circulation of the Daily News to about 2,400.¹

Two Dailies Compete

More important, Johnson noted, was the growth in advertising. In July, at the time of the purchase, the competing Daily Press was receiving 75 percent of the Katz Department Store advertising. After long, hard effort, Johnson was getting more than 50 percent of the Katz lineage and practically all of Anthony's. The News led in grocery advertising, too. Johnson, who at age 72 remains active as a Stillwater real estate agent, attributed the new daily's success to Hinkel's failure to improve the Daily Press. The Press had been a paid circulation publication only about three years, and had made little attempt to offer its readers more than had been included in the earlier free circulation paper.²

Hurst recalls the purchase of the Allen papers and what followed with these words:

My former college classmate, E. E. "Hook" Johnson, had been after me for months to join him in buying the Payne County News, which I think of as the Stillwater News. Borrowing against Hook's inheritance, we closed the deal June 30, 1940, and took possession from Willis F. Allen, the "Old Codger" of column fame.

I was a reserve officer, and had to report to Fort Sill for active duty that July. In August, I moved by family to Stillwater and set forth on my original goal--to convert the three-times-a-week free-distribution Stillwater News into a daily, with paid circulation; to acquire the Associated Press franchise, and to crowd the Daily Press for a merger. To say the Hinkels resented my return to Stillwater is putting it mildly. . .

. . . We started the AP pony September 1, 1940, and went daily in early October. Some months later I learned the Press management, taking UP [United Press] service, had protested our AP application. At the time, I wasn't aware but learned later that my friend, E. K. Gaylord, squelched that protest.

I personally took the [pony] telephone dictation, and reference to our files will show that we not only trounced the Press in national and international news, but we scored one beat after another in local coverage.

Witness the Sunday, October 6, issue in which we had pictures of the OU-A. & M. game played in Norman. I employed Robert E. Cunningham part time, and Bob personally flew to Norman for₃ the photos, which he then developed in his engraving plant.

It soon became evident that Stillwater was not large enough to provide adequate financial returns to two dailies. There also were extraneous factors leading to the sale of both dailies and their sister weeklies in 1941: Hinkel, an integral part of Payne County journalism for so many years, was tiring of the newspaper profession and wanted to spend more time on commercial printing. His sons, John W. and William S., apparently had little interest in continuing the newspapers, also

choosing to pursue careers in commercial printing. Ultimately John W. Hinkel became owner and manager of Hinkel Printing Co. and Hinkel's Book Shop. William S. Hinkel, after the papers were sold, went to Caldwell, Idaho, where he became shop foreman of that city's daily newspaper. John Painter Hinkel, who had been the paragon of early Stillwater journalism, died April 9, 1943. He was 82 years old.

Johnson had felt confident the Daily News could survive as Stillwater's daily newspaper. But his partner was restive. If Hurst were to leave, Johnson might be willing to sell the properties, although he did not actively seek such an opportunity.

In late 1940 Johnson was approached by C. R. Bellatti, who a year earlier had been publisher of the Blackwell Tribune. Bellatti asked him if he thought the local community could support two daily newspapers. Johnson said he did not think so. At that time Johnson revealed to Bellatti his hunch that Hinkel might retire soon, and that the two Hinkel papers might then be on the market. Bellatti then asked Johnson if he would sell his daily and weekly newspapers, if Hinkel would agree to sell the Daily Press and the weekly Gazette. Johnson told Bellatti that under those conditions he would be willing to sell his papers as part of a general merger.⁴

Johnson was no stranger to Bellatti, for they had been competitors before Johnson had purchased the Allen papers after trying for months to work out details. Before coming to Stillwater, Johnson had worked for the Blackwell Journal, which competed against Bellatti's Tribune. With the help of two friends, E. M. McIntyre, former publisher of the Buthrie Leader, and Robert Peterson, publisher of the Wewoka newspaper, Johnson eventually came to terms with Allen for both his weekly and the

three-times-a-week free distribution paper. The sale was consummated after Johnson, as advertising manager, had worked approximately two years for the Payne County News and the Stillwater News.

The Merger Takes Shape

Three days after Johnson's initial discussion with Bellatti, Hinkel agreed to sell his papers and the merger began to take shape. However, Hinkel, for no apparent reason, then changed his mind and backed out of the deal. Part of the problem appeared to be that William Hinkel had not been privy to all details concerning the possible merger.

Johnson, surprised by Hinkel's sudden change in heart, faced a difficult decision. His verbal agreement with Bellatti hinged upon the merger of his daily and that of Hinkel's Press. Now Hinkel had backed down. Should Johnson call the deal off too, or sell? Hurst's discontent, plus the realities of the market, led Johnson to move ahead with his part of the agreement even though Hinkel had withdrawn.

Reflecting upon that phase of his career, Hurst said:

I was aware the Bellattis were flirting with Hook in early 1940; and, frankly, I was less than enthusiastic with small-town newspapering. I discussed the situation with Hook. I had voluntarily taken a sharp cut in salary to go to Stillwater, and I made a ridiculously low offer to step out.

Came Saturday, March 15, 1941, and I was getting out the Sunday paper. About 10 p.m. the Bellattis and Hook sent down a note of one or two sentences from their meeting in the hotel, announcing they had bought my interest.

I ran a tophead story announcing the sale in the Sunday paper and promptly had a call from Bill Steven, then managing editor of the Tulsa Tribune, inviting me to join his staff. After a six weeks' vacation--the only one of any length of time in my life--I reported to the Tribune in May, 1941.

The following story from the March 17, 1941, issue of the Daily

ews announced publicly the sale of Johnson's and Hurst's papers to Bellatti:

Sale of the Stillwater Publishing Co., publishers of The Stillwater News and The Payne County News, was announced Saturday by E. E. Johnson and Irvin Hurst to C. R. Bellatti and R. Marsden Bellatti of Blackwell.

Johnson, however, retains an interest in the company and will remain as advertising manager.

C. Robert Bellatti becomes publisher and general manager and R. Marsden Bellatti the managing editor.

The Bellattis last July sold their morning newspaper in Blackwell, where they had lived since 1912.

From 1912 to 1919 C. R. Bellatti practiced law in Blackwell until he purchased The Blackwell Tribune. The Tribune at that time, in 1919, was a small newspaper which Bellatti had built into a newspaper with a daily circulation in excess of 14,000.

The prospects of the future growth toward which Stillwater is striving and a desire to become a part of it did much to induce the Bellattis to enter the newspaper field in Stillwater.

C. R. Bellatti served two consecutive terms as president of the Chamber of Commerce in Blackwell and was long active in civic work. He is a member of the Lions Club, a Mason, a member of the Country Club, and an elder in the Presbyterian Church. During Gov. William H. Murray's administration he served on the state coordinating board.

Mr. and Mrs. C. R. Bellatti and son, Jimmy, who is in the eighth grade, will live at 136 N. Duck Street. One son, Lawrence, is employed by The Transcript at Norman and a daughter, Mary, is a freshman at the University of Oklahoma.

The other son, R. Marsden Bellatti, and his wife and ⁶son, age six, shortly will establish their home in Stillwater.

There is no record of what transpired during the next eight months to move the merger plans ahead once more.

Johnson recalls that he had discussed the matter with William Inkel and his wife, Lillian, and that some time after that discussion

the Hinkels agreed once again to sell their papers. One day in early November, 1941, the elder Hinkel walked unexpectedly into C. R. Bellatti's Daily News office and announced that he was ready to seal the transaction that would clear the way for the merger. Johnson had sold his interest to Bellatti for \$25,000 and Hinkel was paid the same amount.⁷

On November 9, 1941, the Daily Press announced it had been sold to Bellatti. The newspaper article told its readers that the Daily News would absorb many of the personnel of the Daily Press, with Otis Wile continuing his column in the new Stillwater News-Press. Ray Heath, advertising manager of the Daily Press, would join the advertising staff of the new paper, the article stated. It also explained that John S. Cook, Tommy Howell, R. Howard Williams and Wayne Sloan, members of the paper's backshop staff, would perform the same duties for the News-Press.

In a greeting to readers of the Daily Press' last issue, C. R. Bellatti paid tribute to Hinkel and enunciated the new paper's intentions. Under the headline, "A New Responsibility," Bellatti wrote:

The Stillwater Daily News assumes a new responsibility as a newspaper to the citizens of Stillwater and Payne county.

Through the purchase and consolidation of the Stillwater Daily Press and the Gazette with the Daily News and Payne County News, we as publishers owe a greater obligation to further the upbuilding of everything fine for Stillwater.

We shall find inspiration to fulfill this obligation from the remarkable records and achievements of Mr. John P. Hinkel and other former Stillwater publishers of the Stillwater Daily Press and the Stillwater News and their families. These records still live and will always live because worthwhile accomplishments will benefit the generations to come.

As we attempt to progress with the finest community in

Oklahoma we pledge our unfaltering support to its growth.

To old and new readers alike of this newspaper we pledge honest, accurate news. In truth and in fact, it is your newspaper serving your community. Help us to serve you better.

Juxtaposed next to Bellatti's message was one from Hinkel, bidding is readers farewell and welcoming the new ownership:

Fifty years a newspaper publisher in Payne county. Half a century--that's a long span. From an Army printing press to a perfecting printing press is the range of my newspaper experience.

From a shop of one man and his wife to a building with a force of twenty employees must be accounted some small degree of success. A part of this achievement, however, can be accredited to a long list of loyal and helpful employees and the consistent and financial support of a growing community.

Parting with The Stillwater Weekly Gazette and its younger companion, The Stillwater Daily Press, is a severance of friends who have brought us along a pathway of many changes in Payne county--social and political.

In these later years my sons, John W. and William S. have steered the ship. Today we dispose of these papers to new captains. To them we sincerely wish the fullest success.

To our faithful employees we give our heartiest appreciation. They will not lack in securing ready employment as they are well prepared for any eventuality.

To our many rural correspondents a last and tearful word. They have been of great aid in placing our paper on a firm and solid foundation.

So with this brief parting message, again we extend greetings to the new ownership of The Gazette and The Press.

In whatever line of endeavor my two sons may continue, I trust and hope they will merit and receive the same friendship and cooperation which so generously has been accorded to me.

C. R. Bellatti: A Brief Biography

Who was this man who finally had narrowed the Stillwater market to

ie viable daily? C. R. Bellatti was born December 1, 1886, at Jackson-
 alle, Illinois, the son of Robert M. and Martha Bellatti. He was
 eared on a farm near Mt. Pulaski, Illinois, and was graduated from
 ncoln College with a bachelor of science degree in 1908. That Decem-
 er he married Edith Skidmore Hoblit of Lincoln and the following year
 ie young couple entered the first class in the University of Oklahoma's
 aw school (Mrs. Bellatti was the first woman to attend the school).
 ey were graduated in 1912.¹⁰

Bellatti opened a law office in Blackwell in 1912 and later served
 wo terms each as president of the Chamber of Commerce and as city at-
 orney. In 1919 he purchased the Blackwell Daily Tribune and the fol-
 owing year took over the other newspaper, the Daily News, and merged it
 ith the Tribune. He secured full leased wire service of the Associated
 ress for his paper, installed a 16-page Duplex tubular press and built
 he paper from a circulation of 400, when he bought it, to more than
 3,000 when it was sold in July of 1940.¹¹

Long prominent in Oklahoma politics, Bellatti knew several of Okla-
 oma's governors personally and served as a member of the state board of
 ducation under Gov. William H. Murray from 1931 to 1935. He later
 erved as a member of the board of regents of Oklahoma A. & M. College
 nder Gov. Robert S. Kerr from 1942 to 1946.¹²

Conflict in Blackwell

Perhaps the most crucial and dramatic of those events that form the
 ackdrop for today's Stillwater daily newspaper was to be played out
 ome 60 miles to the north. Prior to buying the Stillwater papers,
 . R. Bellatti and his oldest son, R. Marsden Bellatti, had engaged in a

ven-year showdown with the Blackwell Evening Journal, a new daily
 cked by Ponca City oil man Louis Haines: "Lew" Wentz. Wentz, a multi-
 llionaire bachelor and philanthropist, was the cornerstone of the
 publican Party in Oklahoma. Both men were good men, but both were
 stubborn.¹³

Carper gives this background on Wentz, a national committeeman and
 the state's undisputed party leader:

One of the wealthiest men in the United States, Wentz be-
 came much more than just a politician. He arrived in Oklahoma
 in 1911 with the idea of staying for only six months. Living
 in the Ponca City area, Wentz fell in love with Oklahoma and
 decided to make it his permanent residence.

Having much interest in Oklahoma oil and a lot of faith,
 Wentz began buying leases for himself. It was said he never
 sold a lease.

At one point, Wentz was offered \$4 million for his oil
 interests. With only \$39 in his checking account, he turned
 it down. Because of that decision, Wentz soon became a mil-
 lionaire.

. . . Even now, he is known as one of the most outstanding
 citizens Oklahoma ever had. He looked upon his money as a
 means of helping others. A vast majority of Wentz charities
 were known only to himself and the recipients.¹⁴

Despite Wentz' record of kindness to others, including those who
 wanted to buy newspapers and automobile agencies, Marsden Bellatti told
 the writer he and his father felt Wentz used questionable tactics in his
 attempt to drive the morning Tribune out of business. The conflict was
 intense, and there were no winners in the struggle that sent C. R.
 Bellatti around the state in search of another newspaper, although later
 the two antagonists were on amicable terms.

In 1933, years after C. R. Bellatti merged the Blackwell Daily
tribune and Blackwell Daily News into a seven-day-a-week newspaper with

oth morning and evening editions, merchants now were faced with competing dailies and the problem of how to divide their advertising budgets. Support for the competitors was fairly even, according to Johnson.¹⁵ Wentz used an automobile giveaway contest, among other promotional stunts, to draw advertising to the Journal. To make matters worse, Wentz and C. R. Bellatti experienced great political differences. Bellatti was a close friend of the legendary "Alfalfa Bill" Murray, a brilliant but somewhat eccentric Democrat, while Wentz was a leader in Republican circles. Wentz had publicly stated his unequivocal opposition to Bellatti serving as counsel for Blackwell merchants while operating his newspaper on advertising revenues from some of those same merchants.¹⁶ This may have been a false issue. Both Johnson¹⁷ and J. F. "Chub" Bellatti¹⁸ have said the elder Bellatti did not serve in this capacity after entering newspaper work. He had, however, represented merchant owners of the Tribune before buying the paper himself.

Newspapers survive on advertising revenues, so it is not surprising that two daily newspapers in Blackwell, a town that could profitably support only one daily, would be locked in a struggle for survival and that harsh words would be spoken--and printed. Johnson provided another slant on the fight for advertising loyalties:

About a week before the Journal went to press for the first time on July 11, Mr. Bellatti lowered his rates; not much, but he lowered them. Shortly after that, then, just after I got there, Mr. Bellatti offered a 10 percent discount for all exclusive advertising in one calendar month. So one evening Mr. McIntyre drove me home. Their circulation was perhaps four times what ours was and we had a new paper up against an old established paper. And he [McIntyre] said, 'Now with this offer on exclusive advertising, we'll have to lower our rate to be equal on a mil line basis.' He said we'd have to go to 15 cents a column inch. So he asked me to think about it. The first thing I knew about a week after that he said we're

going to 15 cents an inch. And Bellatti then stepped up his opposition to our paper and to Wentz. He [McIntyre] was trying to get them on equal footing. We weren't making any money at the other rate. I'm sure of that. And then when you lowered to 15 cents and bucked this 10 percent for exclusive advertising we were just practically losing all the cost of operation. We were losing money; we were darn near paying the merchants to take our advertising.

The Federal Trade Commission charged our paper, at Mr. Bellatti's complaint, with unfair trade practices because we lowered our rates so. But we lowered those because he offered a discount [for exclusive] advertising. We had to counter to allow for that 10 percent. The Daily Oklahoman did the same thing at about the same time to the Oklahoma News, the Scripps-Howard paper in Oklahoma City. The Federal Trade Commission finally issued a cease-and-desist order against the Oklahoma Publishing Co. Editor & Publisher once said in a story that considering the market and the size of the papers [in Blackwell] it was the worst newspaper war in the annals of the United States.¹⁹

What led to such suicidal efforts on the part of the Journal, backed by Wentz' oil riches? Political differences alone could not account for the severity of the conflict. Wentz became incensed, Marsden Bellatti said, when the elder Bellatti published the names of 10 state senators who had moved to impeach Henry S. Johnston.²⁰ This may have led to some early invective, and as time went on Wentz no doubt took umbrage at Bellatti's editorial comments about his role in Oklahoma politics. He headquartered in Ponca City, only a few miles to the east of Blackwell, and not only was a highly visible news figure but had considerable local interest as well.

As a member of the state highway commission, one of Wentz' pet projects, Marsden Bellatti said, was a plan to construct Highway 60 from Ponca City to Tonkawa. Blackwell leaders, however, preferred to seek state funds to build Highway 11 to the Grant County line. Wentz reportedly told county commissioners if they would approve the request to seek funds for Highway 60, he would later see that necessary capital was

provided to build the other highway later. Commissioners acquiesced, and Highway 60 became a reality. Bellatti said Wentz never fulfilled his promise to provide funds for the highway favored by C. R. Bellatti and other Blackwell leaders.²¹

Johnson, who later became a business partner with C. R. Bellatti in Millwater and regarded him highly, feels that Marsden Bellatti's account of the highway issue is only partially correct. Johnson said:

The trade area for the Ponca City News was to the northeast, east, south and to some extent due west to Tonkawa and perhaps on farther. The big market that we drew in Blackwell was in Grant County and northern Kay County. The Highway Commission as constituted in those days was two members of the majority party and one member of the minority party. Well, the Democrats were the majority party so they had two and the Republicans had one. In those days the county built its own roads and they had [only] so much money each year and I believe they got a little assistance from the state--this was when the state was just really getting into the road business--and Ponca City wanted the stretch of road between Ponca City and Tonkawa paved. The Blackwell people wanted to go west toward Medford in Grant County. They couldn't pave beyond the county line. The commission formed of these two Democrats and Wentz met with the people of Kay County. The county commissioners of Kay County met with them and it was agreed that all the funds that would be available in that particular fiscal year would go toward paving from Ponca City to Tonkawa. Then the next year the funds would be available to go from Blackwell over to the Grant County line. It was all in agreement; that was okay. They paved it. Then they had a change of administration and Bill Murray came into the picture as governor. He replaced the two Democrats and he tried to replace Wentz but that was a fight within itself. So the two men who were in agreement with Wentz on what would happen were out. The new guys disagreed with [the plan]. They didn't carry through. That's where I fault Mr. Bellatti. He blamed Wentz on it. And Wentz was still for the agreement. But he was in a minority--he might as well have stayed at home when they voted. Murray was backing these fellows, and they wanted to get Wentz off the highway commission. And they were trying to embarrass him. And apparently Mr. Bellatti thought that if they could get Wentz off, Murray would see that [the new appointees] would carry through on this. I'm making an assumption on that.

If Bellatti had stopped his attacks after the Journal started I don't believe Wentz would have advanced any more money to

McIntyre. I think the Journal would have had to sink or swim. But after he stepped up those attacks, Wentz got madder. He was accused by Bellatti of reneging on [the highway] arrangement and Wentz was having to fight to keep Murray from kicking him off the board. If there hadn't been that change in the highway commission, the highway would have been built long before it was. It was finally built in 1935. Bellatti was jumping mad because they didn't get that. He might have had assurances from Murray that if they could get rid of Wentz²² then the commissioners would follow through with the highway.

Had it not been for the highway issue and the stepped up criticism of Wentz, the situation may not have gotten out of hand. There were other factors to be considered, however, as Johnson pointed out:

Now the depression was getting pretty rough in 1932 and 1933 and two banks went broke in Blackwell and one or two savings and loans, and Blackwell was unusually hard hit. Mr. Bellatti had never lowered his rates. . .but the merchants' profits were being lowered and they held a mass meeting one night at the Chamber of Commerce and discussed with Mr. Bellatti that he was going to have to reduce their advertising [rates] and he said he couldn't possibly lower his rates. And they pointed out that newsprint and this and that were dropping. He said he couldn't do it.

At about the same time, E. M. McIntyre and Raymond Fields were running the Guthrie Daily Leader. Fields was a good friend of Wentz and Wentz had backed him in the Guymon paper and the Okemah paper and this one [Guthrie] and lent him money. McIntyre and Fields married two sisters. Fields liked to travel and kept McIntyre running the paper. He wasn't too satisfied, and yet by marriage they were related. He heard that the people of Blackwell were unhappy with the newspaper situation up there and he went to Blackwell and surveyed the town. He found out that Wentz and Bellatti were crossed. He secured a loan of \$50,000 from Wentz. I guess Wentz was more agreeable to it because it would be in opposition to his opponent. They bought a building that was in receivership and they²³ started to build this paper. It was an evening paper.

It is Johnson's opinion that Wentz advanced money to McIntyre "from time to time," and that Wentz "probably never intended to collect." McIntyre signed notes for \$10,000 or \$15,000 on these occasions.²⁴ In

is four years on the Journal, Johnson "never saw Wentz enter the door of the newspaper."²⁵

When McIntyre started the Journal, it was widely known that Wentz had provided the capital, although his name never appeared in the masthead. Wentz would also purchase a Blackwell bank in which C. R. Bellatti had a sizable financial interest. Under Wentz' authority the bank was liquidated, Marsden Bellatti said, but nearly 98 percent of Bellatti's interest was returned when Security State Bank liquidation proceedings were completed.²⁶

There were other lesser-known reasons for Bellatti's adversary relationship with Wentz, including the oil man's plans for what was then Blackwell Country Club. Wentz foreclosed on the country club, Marsden Bellatti said, because he wanted to use the land to increase the deer population in that part of the state.²⁷ Johnson disagrees with any such motive. The country club had gone broke, he said, although Wentz may have held a mortgage on it. It was later reactivated.²⁸

The confrontation came to a head during the period of 1935 to 1939, however, when the Federal Trade Commission began investigating the Journal's advertising policies. During this period the Journal was selling advertising for 15 cents a column inch, nearly 65 cents below rates of other area newspapers. Bellatti was instrumental in the FTC investigation. Marsden Bellatti said that in 1939, Wentz told the elder Bellatti he would sell the Journal to him if Bellatti would stop the FTC investigation. At that time Wentz' paper had a circulation of about 10,000, less than Bellatti's 14,000 figure. Marsden Bellatti said his father refused to halt the investigation, and it subsequently was assigned for litigation to Judge Edgar S. Vaught in Oklahoma City. The

earings revealed that Wentz was losing about \$100,000 per year through his cut-rate advertising scheme.²⁹ Although the FTC brought the Journal into line, the Daily Tribune had been sorely wounded and was unable to procure enough advertising revenue to continue. In June of 1940, C. R. Bellatti sold the Tribune to Wentz for an undisclosed amount.³⁰ Johnson gave the price as \$58,000 plus certain obligations assumed by Wentz.³¹ Wentz' losses have been estimated at nearly a million dollars in the seven years. Bellatti said records show Wentz continued losing money after the FTC action, and from 1942 to 1943 showed a \$500,000 loss.³² Johnson doubts that these figures are valid.³³

Another outcome of the fight is described by Johnson:

. . . We had a union fight up there. Well it wasn't much of a fight. Mr. McIntyre wasn't particularly in love with the International Typographical Union (ITU). But we had some pretty good printers and they were threatening to walk out. They were trying to get Bellatti's Tribune unionized too, and finally Mr. McIntyre gave in and went union. The union went up there one Sunday afternoon to tell [Bellatti] they had met and McIntyre and the Journal had agreed to their demands. Bellatti ran them out of his office. I guess he really ran them out. That was pretty well known. He operated as a non-union plant. I don't think he ever was unionized.³⁴

Wentz, a native of Pennsylvania, died in 1949.³⁵ The Blackwell Journal is owned today by the Donrey Media Group.

Bellatti said his father continued his interest in owning a newspaper, but was undecided about where to locate. In 1940, according to Bellatti, he and his father were driving through Stillwater when Johnson and Bill Kratz, a former law partner of Bellatti, saw them and signaled for them to pull over.³⁶ Kratz was then teaching at Oklahoma A. & M. College. Johnson had worked for the Blackwell Journal and "got all I wanted after four years."³⁷

Stopping to talk with the men, Bellatti was told by Johnson that Marvin Hurst was unhappy with the Daily News and wanted out. Johnson did not ask C. R. Bellatti if he would be interested in the Stillwater Daily News and its sister weekly, but he left the door ajar. From that street corner conversation eventually would come the purchase and subsequent merger of both Stillwater newspaper companies.³⁸

Johnson's version of the curbside conversation among C. R. and Marsden Bellatti, Bill Kratz and himself suggests the trip through Stillwater was more or less due to happenstance. The trip may have been more purposeful than suggested. James R. Bellatti recalled in 1982 that there were good reasons for his father to be interested in the Stillwater market. Dr. Henry G. Bennett, A. & M. president, had encouraged C. R. Bellatti to make the move. The two had worked closely together on various projects and were friends. In addition, there was encouragement from Kratz, who saw potential in the growing college community.³⁹ Another friend, the late O. H. Lachenmeyer, publisher of the Cushing Citizen, may have encouraged the move as well.⁴⁰

A Lew Wentz Postscript

The Bellattis had not seen the last of Wentz, however. Marsden Bellatti recalled that in 1942 their former competitor walked into the News-Press offices and told the younger Bellatti that if he had known the men were capable of publishing such a fine newspaper, he would never have supported a newspaper in competition with their former Blackwell publication. Then, according to Bellatti, the oil millionaire asked if the Bellattis could use any money to help with their new venture. Marsden Bellatti said he and his father told Wentz they had no use for

is money.⁴¹ L. F. Bellatti throws a different light on the matter. Wentz frequently was in Stillwater in connection with Development Foundation work at the college, and would drop in at the News-Press. C. R. Bellatti and Wentz had sought to bury the past, and there was no apparent acrimony between the men. On several occasions, L. F. Bellatti said, Wentz offered to help, but each time his father graciously declined with thanks.⁴²

In 1960 Marsden Bellatti left Stillwater to publish the Nowata Daily Star. His younger brothers, Lawrence F. "Chub" Bellatti and James R., were by then an integral part of the organization and continue today as co-publishers. A story on the paper's 40th anniversary tells the rest:

Their father, C. R., died in 1953 and their mother carried the title of president until the mid-60s when the brothers became co-publishers, Jim being editor and Chub business manager.

Marsden had sold his interest in the early '60s and bought and became publisher of the Nowata Star. He sold it in 1979 and retired.

Mary, C. R.'s daughter, and her husband, Bob Palmer, publish the Mount Pleasant, Tex., Tribune.

Other than the Bellatti brothers, two other employees of what is now the NewsPress* came aboard that first year.

Bookkeeper Lucille Allen was in that position with the Stillwater News when C. R. Bellatti took over in 1941 and Alice Church was society editor for Hinkel's Daily Press when it became part of Stillwater Publishing Co.⁴³

*The NewsPress (two words without a space between them and with no hyphen) is referred to throughout this thesis as the News-Press, which was the style until a recent change in format.

FOOTNOTES

¹E. E. Johnson, Personal Interview, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 12, 1980.

²Ibid.

³Irvin Hurst, Personal correspondence, May 29, 1981.

⁴E. E. Johnson, Personal Interview, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 12, 1980.

⁵Irvin Hurst, Personal correspondence, May 29, 1981.

⁶Daily News (March 17, 1941)

⁷Irvin Hurst, Personal Interview, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 1, 1980, and E. E. Johnson, Personal Interview, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 12, 1980.

⁸Daily News (March 17, 1941)

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰W. P. Montgomery, Interview with C. R. Bellatti, May 12, 1951, and "Who's Who in America," 1946 volume.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²R. Marsden Bellatti, Personal Interview, Nowata, Oklahoma, September 12, 1980.

¹³E. E. Johnson, Interview with Harry Heath, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 24, 1982.

¹⁴Deleise Carper, "Lew Wentz." (Forty-second in a seventy-five part newspaper series sponsored by the Oklahoma Heritage Association as its contribution to the Diamond Jubilee Celebration.).

¹⁵E. E. Johnson, Interview with Harry Heath, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 24, 1982.

¹⁶R. Marsden Bellatti, Personal Interview, Nowata, Oklahoma, September 12, 1980.

¹⁷James R. and L. F. Bellatti, Interview with Harry Heath, Stillwater, Oklahoma, July 1, 1981.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹E. E. Johnson, Interview with Harry Heath, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 24, 1982.

²⁰R. Marsden Bellatti, Personal Interview, Nowata, Oklahoma, September 12, 1980.

²¹R. Marsden Bellatti, Personal Interview, Nowata, Oklahoma, September 12, 1980; E. E. Johnson, Personal Interview, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 12, 1980; and Irvin Hurst, Personal Interview, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 2, 1980.

²²E. E. Johnson, Interview with Harry Heath, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 24, 1982.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶R. Marsden Bellatti, Personal Interview, Nowata, Oklahoma, September 12, 1980.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸E. E. Johnson, Interview with Harry Heath, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 24, 1982.

²⁹R. Marsden Bellatti, Personal Interview, Nowata, Oklahoma, September 12, 1980.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹E. E. Johnson, Interview with Harry Heath, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 24, 1982.

³²R. Marsden Bellatti, Personal Interview, Nowata, Oklahoma, September 12, 1980.

³³E. E. Johnson, Interview with Harry Heath, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 24, 1982.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Deleise Carper, "Lew Wentz." (Forty-second in a seventy-five part newspaper series sponsored by the Oklahoma Heritage Association as its contribution to the Diamond Jubilee Celebration.).

³⁶R. Marsden Bellatti, Personal Interview, Nowata, Oklahoma, September 12, 1980.

³⁷E. E. Johnson, Interview with Harry Heath, Stillwater, Oklahoma, June 24, 1982.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹James R. and L. F. Bellatti, Interview with Harry Heath, Stillwater, Oklahoma, July 1, 1982.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹R. Marsden Bellatti, Personal Interview, Nowata, Oklahoma, September 12, 1980.

⁴²James R. and L. F. Bellatti, Interview with Harry Heath, Stillwater, Oklahoma, July 1, 1982.

⁴³"It's Our 40th Year in Town," Stillwater NewsPress, March 17, 1981, p. 1.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This history of the Stillwater News-Press is an amalgam of many other histories, most of which are worthy of protracted study. A good example is the Gazette, founded by the venerable Charles F. Neerman. The Gazette lies at the vortex of Payne County's journalism history and in its own right a colorful, revealing story.

Summing Up

The Gazette, like most of the early newspapers of this area, was founded as a sounding board for a certain political party, in this case the Populist Party. In time, however, the paper took up the Republican party banner and for half a century held closely to that party's beliefs. Among those colorful editors who shaped the paper's ideological direction were Frank D. Northup, J. E. Sater, J. W. Moats and Charles M. Becker. In a thesis designed to cover as lengthy a period as is addressed here, not enough time could be devoted to these men and their efforts.

The same may be said of other editors who were instrumental in the journalistic evolution which culminated in today's News-Press. The agle is another example, as is the Perkins Journal, where Hinkel honed his newspaper talents. But the Gazette most of all offers itself as a topic for further study. Implicit in such a study would be the colorful

editorials of E. H. Brown and Hinkel, who consistently lambasted the policies of William H. "Alfalfa Bill" Murray.

This thesis is only an outline--limited by time and resources--of journalism's growth in this area. Many points alluded to here could be developed more fully in future studies. Before the writer suggests specific topics that seem favorable for study, a word of caution, or admonition, is necessary: Finding complete historical documentation of some of these publications is difficult.

In fact, there is no single reference that deals collectively with these early papers and their editors. The writer found that the only way to approach even a bare historical analysis was to visit state libraries and view the editions that are preserved on microfilm. The starting point should be, as it was for the author, at the Oklahoma Historical Society Library in the capitol complex at Oklahoma City. There students will find, in most cases, at least a few examples of most of the early-day Payne County newspapers.

Then a trip to the University of Oklahoma's Media Resources Center may be beneficial. Undergraduate students in the OU program have, over the years, been assigned term papers on many early Oklahoma newspapers, and there are several that deal with Payne County. After this the study will become investigative, as it was for the writer--tying up loose ends and filling out the study.

Some of those who might have been helpful sources of historical narrative showed little enthusiasm for the project. To some it seemed a useless "retelling of the story" of the News-Press' founding. L. F. "Chub" and James R. Bellatti, co-publishers, were helpful in suggesting references that provided some insight into this history. Special

hanks, however, should be given to the late R. Marsden Bellatti of Owata who, although he had had no direct ties with the News-Press for any years, provided invaluable information about the family's trials and tribulations in Blackwell's costly newspaper war.

Recommendations for Further Study

It is hoped that this thesis will provide a starting point for many other studies related to Oklahoma journalism history. Here, in the writer's view, are ideas for further study, ideas generally accessible and rich in color:

1. The Republican, established September 1, 1892, by S. A. Reese. He edited the publication for a group of "leftist" Republicans who did not follow the politics of the Gazette. Reese was employed by the Gazette prior to the founding of the Republican.

2. Payne County Populist, founded September 21, 1893, with S. S. Holcomb listed on the masthead as proprietor. Within days, however, A. D. Krebs was listed as proprietor. This was a weekly, unwavering in its support for Populist ideals.

3. Stillwater Advance, first published on January 3, 1901. This successor to the Populist cooperated closely with the Christian Science Church, which paid for space to provide editorial content of a religious and educational nature, as it did in other papers of the period.

John S. Hale was first listed as editor. The paper's ties may also be traced to the Oklahoma Condor and later the Hawk. The writer found little background information on the Condor and Hawk, but they apparently were the earliest Populist newspapers in this part of the state. Brief data on each may be found in the previously mentioned Oklahoma Imprints,

935-1907.

4. The Gazette as mentioned, might well have been first on this list because of its legacy, and the abundance of available reference material. The writer chose not to give the Gazette top priority for further research, however, because of the extended attention given to it in this thesis. Still, it could yield much more through a focused analysis.

5. Louis H. "Lew" Wentz. Although Blackwell is not a part of the immediate Stillwater vicinity, Lew Wentz, at least indirectly, played an important role in the Bellatti family's move here from Blackwell and the subsequent creation of a merged News-Press. Wentz' Blackwell venture is historically significant because of the power he wielded in Oklahoma political decisions.

6. Cushing Citizen and Yale News. Because they played no major role in the formation of the Stillwater News-Press, these Payne County newspapers have received scant attention in this thesis. Three newspapers served Cushing prior to 1907, and one Yale. None of the names of these early papers was carried forward (see Appendix B). Both the Citizen and the News have had colorful roles in Payne County journalism, and would be fitting subjects for future research.

There are a myriad of other topics suggestive of further study in this thesis, but those above struck the writer as holding the most color and significance. Anyone desiring to elaborate on any of these topics may have to dig diligently, but that digging will prove to be a revealing, interesting exploration.

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Payne County Populist, November 17, 1893.

Perkins Journal, January 21, January 23, 1892; February 25, March 10, May 26, August 18, August 24, 1893; February 20, and study of issues, 1895; October 22, 1897; March 31, April 21, 1911.

Populist, March 3, March 19, 1894; September 27, 1900.

Stillwater Advance, January 3, August, 1901; February 6, 1902; March 16, April 20, 1905.

Stillwater Gazette, April 1, 1892; June 1, 1893; October 8, 1937.

Stillwater Daily News-Press, April 9, 1943.

Stillwater Democrat, September 27, 1928.

"It's Our 40th Year in Town." Stillwater NewsPress, March 17, 1981.

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APPENDIXES

The appendixes are from Oklahoma Imprints, 1835-1907, Carolyn Thomas Foreman, listing newspapers published in Stillwater and Payne County between 1835-1907.

APPENDIX A

NEWSPAPERS OF STILLWATER

Stillwater Advance

In 1902-3 the Stillwater Advance was published by John S. Hale. It was issued Thursdays in support of the Populist party.¹

Advance-Democrat

The Advance-Democrat was a weekly which was advertised as founded September 1, 1892. Irvin Owings Diggs came to Oklahoma in 1900 and became the editor and publisher of the Advance-Democrat that year. He was born at Arrow Rock, Missouri, June 5, 1873, and published a newspaper in his native state before moving to Oklahoma. In 1905 Freeman E. Miller became the editor and publisher. He was from Indiana and a graduate of DePauw University. He was a lawyer and pioneer newspaper man. Vol. XIV, No. 28, was published Thursday, January 4, 1906, with eight pages of six columns. The size was 15 x 22, the price \$1.00 and the inner pages were ready-prints. Freeman E. Miller and I. O. Diggs were the editors. Diggs was business manager and the paper was issued by the Stillwater Advance Printing and Publishing Company. Six weeks later (Vol. XIV, No. 34) Diggs' name was alone as editor and remained so to December 27, 1906. When Miller left the paper he became editor of the Stillwater People's Progress.²

The Advance-Democrat, in 1907, was being published as the weekly edition of the Stillwater Democrat. It was issued Thursdays; had eight pages, 15 x 22. The price was \$1.00 and the publisher reported 1,550 subscribers. The weekly was published by the Advance Printing and Publishing Company, inc., and I. O. Diggs was the editor.³

Bee

Wade Gray was editor and publisher of the Stillwater Bee in 1902-3. This weekly was distributed Wednesdays and it was independent.⁴

Oklahoma A. and M. College Mirror

The College Mirror was a monthly publication established in 1895. No. 1, Vol. III, was issued September 15, 1897, by Freeman E. Miller. It had 16 pages of 2 columns and sold for 25 cents a year.⁵

Common People

Vol. I, No. 1, of the Common People was published Thursday, October 1, 1903, by C. M. Becker. The paper supported the Socialist party. It was 13 x 20 and four pages were published. Ready-prints were used for the inside pages. Becker stated in his salutatory that he had been a citizen of Stillwater 12 years. There was no change to December 15, 1904.⁶ Three numbers of Common People are listed in the annotated catalogue of newspaper files in the library of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison.

Condor

The Condor was founded at Stillwater February 16, 1893. The price

was \$1.00 and four pages of six columns, 15 x 22, were issued by Goerge H. Doud, editor and proprietor, who bought ready-prints for the inner pages. Vol. I, Nos. 2-33, were published February 23 to September 28, 1894.⁷

Democrat (Weekly)

An advertisement of the Democrat in 1900 gives N. A. Jamison as the editor and publisher and states that eight pages were issued. The date of founding is given as 1889, but No. 37 of Vol. XII, issued Friday, November 2, 1900, explains that the paper was "succeeding the State Sentinel," which was started in 1893 as the successor to the Oklahoma Hawk, which was launched in 1890.

I. O. Diggs, editor and publisher of the Democrat, issued four pages, 15 x 22, for \$1.00 a year. With No. 1 of Vol. XIII, Thursday instead of Friday became publication day. There was no change to December 26, 1901.⁸ In 1905 the weekly had 1,000 readers and in 1907, 550 new patrons had been added. At that time the paper was advertised as the Advance-Democrat. It was still published Thursdays by Diggs and the Advance Printing and Publishing Company.⁹

Daily Democrat

The Daily Democrat was started in 1902. Vol. I, No. 105, was distributed Wednesday, January 28, 1903, with four pages. The size was 13 x 20 and ready-prints filled the inner pages. I. O. Diggs was the editor and proprietor. The issue for Monday, April 27, 1903, was "under the management of the local W. C. T. U." In 1906 the daily had a circulation of 135. The journal appeared every evening but Sundays with four

pages, 11 x 18, and subscribers paid \$4.50 per annum. It was issued by the Advance Printing and Publishing Company, Inc.¹⁰

Eagle-Gazette

The Oklahoma Eagle was started in 1892, the Gazette in 1889, and the two papers were combined January 1, 1894. No. 4 of Vol. V was circulated Friday, January 5, 1894, by Charles M. Becker and the Eagle-Gazette Publishing Company. The size was 13 x 20 with eight pages. The inside pages were ready-prints. Becker's name did not appear on the next number and February 9, 1894, Frank D. Northup became the editor and manager, with Becker as associate editor. On June 14, 1894, Joe A. Litsinger and C. F. Neerman were editors and there was no further change to February 4, 1895.¹¹

Farmers' Fact and Fancy

Farmers' Fact and Fancy was published at Stillwater every week. In 1906 the publisher's statement of the average circulation was 3,000.¹²

Oklahoma Eagle

Established at Stillwater in 1892, the Oklahoma Eagle was independent politically. It was published Thursdays and had four pages, 17 x 24.¹³ One copy of the Eagle is in the files of the Oklahoma Historical Society. It was issued December 29, 1893, and is No. 24 of Vol. II. There are eight pages of five columns and the size is 13 x 20. The Eagle Publishing Company sponsored the publication. The Oklahoma Eagle was united with the Gazette January 1, 1984, and was thereafter called the Eagle-Gazette. Frank D. Northup served as its editor as well as ed-

itor of the Taloga Occident, the Stockman-Farmer and the Oklahoma Farm Journal at Stillwater.¹⁴

Oklahoma Farmer

The Oklahoma Farmer was a weekly printed on Saturdays. N. Davis was editor and publisher and his paper consisted of eight pages, 15 x 22. The weekly was started in 1890; the price was \$1.00 a year.¹⁵

Oklahoma Hawk

Patrick H. Guthrey and his son, E. B. Guthrey, launched the Oklahoma Hawk at Payne Center in 1890 and when the county seat was removed to Stillwater, the paper and plant were also moved. The weekly was issued Thursdays in support of the Democratic party. It had four pages, 18 x 24, and the inside pages were ready-prints.¹⁶

Guthrey once met Bill Doolin, the outlaw, and some of his men on the road and Doolin asked: "Say, Bee, are you still running that one-horse newspaper over at Stillwater?" I told him 'yes' and he asked what the subscription price was. I told him \$1.00 per year and he reached down into a shot sack swinging from the pommel of his saddle and picked out a handful of its contents and threw it overhand to me. It fell at the feet of my horse and he sat and watched me as I got down and picked it up. After I got through gathering it up from the dust of the road I found I was the possessor of eleven silver dollars, and I told Bill that would pay him for eleven years and asked him where I should send the paper. He laughed and said he hadn't thought of that, but finally told me to send it to Ingalls until I heard that he was dead and then to send it to hell."¹⁷

Oklahoma Law Journal (Monthly)

The Oklahoma Law Journal was first published at Stillwater in 1902-3. It was edited by Daniel H. Fernandes, attorney-at-law.¹⁸

Oklahoma Standard

The Oklahoma Standard, a weekly newspaper established at Stillwater in 1889, was published Saturday. Four pages, 15 x 22, were printed and the price was \$1.00. Jo W. Merifield was editor and publisher.¹⁹

Oklahoma State

No. 8, Vol. I, of the Oklahoma State appeared at Stillwater Tuesday, February 1, 1898. This paper was 13 x 20. The name of the editor and publisher was not revealed. An offer of a position was printed in that edition: "Are You A Printer? There is a job hanging on the hook in this office for a printer who can print. No high salaried rule twister need apply. Night work. Straight cases. The whiskey is good here but the consumption must be kept within decorous limit." The name of the editor did not appear until No. 11, when E. E. Vail was filling the position; he continued through No. 108, May 23, 1898. The price was \$1.00.²⁰

Oklahoma State Sentinel

The Oklahoma State Sentinel was the successor to the Oklahoma Hawk, which was started in 1890. The Sentinel was begun in 1893. James K. Allen and Freeman E. Miller were Editors, while Allen and Clark published the weekly. No. 25, Vol. IV, was issued Thursday, November 2, 1895,

with eight pages. Ready-prints were furnished the publishers, the size was 15 x 22 and the price \$1.00. Four weeks later Miller's name was gone, and June 7, 1894, the weekly was issued by the Oklahoma State Sentinel Publishing Company with Allen as editor and Hays Hamilton as business manager. This arrangement continued until December 20, 1894, when Hamilton became editor. The edition of January 10, 1895, was 18 x 24 and four pages of seven columns were distributed by the same staff.²¹

Payne County Populist

The Payne County Populist was an organ of the People's party published in Stillwater. The paper was started September 1, 1892. It had four pages and the size was 17 x 24. Friday was the publication day. In 1897 the paper was printed on Thursday and ready-prints were used for the inner pages. C. W. and F. W. Wright, brothers, were the editors and proprietors and they issued eight pages, 15 x 22, in 1900.²²

People's Progress

Established at Stillwater in 1904, the People's Progress was independent politically. The paper was the successor to Farmer's Fact and Fancy and the editor described it as "a Journal of Ideas." In February, 1906, the Progress had a guaranteed circulation of 3,000. The size was 15 x 22 and part of the eight pages were patent sheets. Freeman E. Miller was editor in charge, L. B. Irvin assistant editor and traveling representative. The last page contained a section devoted to books and magazines. Irvin's name was missing February 22, 1907. The paper was sold for \$1.00 a year.²³

State Herald

The State Herald was a Democratic newspaper published at Stillwater. In 1907 this weekly was printed Thursdays with eight pages, 13 x 20 and the price was \$1.00. The editor and publisher was John R. Scott.²⁴

Stillwater Gazette (Weekly)

The weekly Stillwater Gazette, established in 1889, was edited and published by Dan. W. Murphy. Four pages, 18 x 24, were printed and the subscription price was \$1.25 a year. S. A. Reese became associated with Murphy and the number of pages was doubled while the size was then 13 x 20 and the price \$1.50. The publishers proudly advertised that the circulation exceeded 100. J. E. Sater was editor of the Gazette in the spring (May) of 1892 and Frank D. Northup also served as the editor for a time, while on the faculty of the A. and M. College at Stillwater. The circulation was then 690.²⁵

Charles M. Becker was editor and publisher in 1893, when the Gazette had eight pages with patent sheets for the inner pages. The paper issued February 21, 1895 (Vol. VI, no. 10), stated that the Gazette was started in 1889, the Eagle in 1892, and that the two papers were consolidated January 1, 1894. C. F. Neerman was the editor and Joe A. Litsinger publisher. The size was 15 x 22 and four pages with patent outside sheets were published. Litsinger's name was missing in No. 23, while Neerman was still editor.²⁶ The Gazette was Republican and was distributed Fridays. It was priced at \$1.00 in 1900 and Neerman was still at the helm in 1902-3. In 1905 the circulation was 1,050 and in

1906, 2,600, according to the publisher's statement. One year later it was 1,500 and four pages, 15 x 22, were issued by Edwin H. Brown, as editor, and John P. Hinkle and E. H. Brown, publishers.²⁷

Stillwater Gazette (Daily)

The Stillwater Daily Gazette was published every evening except Sundays. In 1905 the subscribers numbered 800.²⁸

Stillwater Messenger

The Stillwater Messenger was first published Friday, October 12, 1894, by Frank H. Millard and G. G. Guthrey, editors and proprietors. The weekly was 18 x 24 and had seven columns to a page. The price was \$1.00. In No. 19 of Vol. I (February 15, 1895) Gordon Guthrey was editor and proprietor.²⁹

Stillwater Populist

"The Populist was started without a dollar. It bought the Republican outfit, on time. Al Krebs having staked nothing, hastened to rake off everything in sight. It is said he swindled Stillwater merchants out of \$300. But he has departed. Like the Arabs, he silently stole away. (With emphasis on the 'stole.') Now it is announced that Hon. V. H. Biddison of Kansas,.... has taken charge of the Populist and will edit it....."³⁰

Stockman and Farmer

Frank D. Northup on May 1, 1901, became editor and publisher of the Stockman and Farmer at Stillwater, a position he held for one year. In

1902 he became associated with John Fields in the purchase of the Oklahoma Farm Journal at Stillwater.³¹ Northup was also editor of the Stillwater Eagle-Gazette and the Taloga Occident.

Tidings

Tidings was a Baptist semi-monthly publication issued at Stillwater.³²

FOOTNOTES

¹Polk's Oklahoma Gazetteer and Business Directory, Chicago-Detroit, 1902-3, pp. 368, 872.

²Oklahoma Historical Society files; N. W. Ayer and Son's, Newspaper Annual, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1880-3, 1886-9, 1890-1, 1895, 1907.

³Polk, pp. 368, 872.

⁴Dauchy & Company, Newspaper Catalogue, New York, New York, 1897; Kansas State Historical Society files.

⁵Oklahoma Historical Society files.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸George P. Rowell and Company, American Newspaper Directory, New York, New York, 1876-8, 1880, 1886-9, 1890-1900; Oklahoma Historical Society files.

⁹Ayer, 1907.

¹⁰Oklahoma Historical Society files; Lord & Thomas Pocket Directory, Chicago, Illinois, 1890, 1891, 1907; Ayer, 1907.

¹¹Oklahoma Historical Society files.

¹²Lord & Thomas, 1906.

¹³Eureka Newspaper Guide, Binghampton, New York, New York, 1893, 1894.

¹⁴Oklahoma Historical Society files.

¹⁵Rowell, 1891; Booksellers, Stationers and Printers Reference Directory, 1891.

¹⁶Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. III, No. 1, pp. 74 ff; Lord & Thomas, 1891; Eureka, 1894.

¹⁷Chronicles of Oklahoma, loc. cit.

¹⁸Polk, p. 368.

- ¹⁹Rowell, 1890; Booksellers, Stationers and Printers Reference Directory, 1891.
- ²⁰Oklahoma Historical Society files.
- ²¹Ibid.
- ²²Eureka, 1894; Dauchy & Co., 1897; Rowell, 1900; Oklahoma Historical Society files.
- ²³Oklahoma Historical Society files; Ayer, 1907; J. B. Thoburn, History of Oklahoma, V, 2079-81.
- ²⁴Ayer, 1907.
- ²⁵Rowell, 1891-2; Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. III, No. 4, p. 289; Remington Brothers, Newspaper Manual, Pittsburgh-New York, 1892.
- ²⁶Oklahoma Historical Society files.
- ²⁷Eureka, 1894; Rowell, 1900; Polk, p. 368; H. W. Kastor & Sons, Newspaper and Magazine Directory, St. Louis-Kansas City-Chicago, 1905; Lord & Thomas, 1906; Ayer, 1907.
- ²⁸Kastor, 1904-5.
- ²⁹Oklahoma Historical Society files.
- ³⁰Oklahoma Standard, Clayton, November 25, 1893, p. 4, col. 1.
- ³¹Thoburn, V, 2094-5.
- ³²Lord & Thomas, 1906.

APPENDIX B

NEWSPAPERS OF OKLAHOMA TERRITORY

Clayton, Payne County

Oklahoma Standard

The Oklahoma Standard was founded at Clayton in 1891. The names of editor and publisher were not given when the paper was printed on Saturday, August 12, 1893 (Vol. II, No. 41). The size was 15 x 22 and four pages of six columns were issued for \$1.00 a year.

The names of Kilpatrick and Sharpe were at the masthead October 21, 1893, and the Standard was called, "Offical Paper of Payne County Populists." B. P. Gould was announced as the new publisher of the weekly and Henry E. Sharpe was the proprietor. The outside pages were crudely printed, while the two inside pages were ready-prints.

The edition for February 24, 1894, gave Henry E. Sharpe as the owner and Mabel LaBare as the publisher. Her place was soon taken by W. J. Rendall, but the firm was later Sharpe and LaBare. In 1894 the paper was advertised as Republican,¹ but the edition of Saturday, June 30 (p. 1, col. 1), carried a notice "to the public" that the Standard was under entirely new management. It would support the Democratic party. The editor had been a Democrat all of her life ". . . was rocked in a Democratic cradle and raised on good old Jeffersonian food. . ." This was signed by Fannie Neal Barth.²

Cushing, Payne County

Cushing Democrat

The Cushing Democrat was launched in 1906. Paul A. Wintersteen was the editor and publisher. His weekly was distributed Thursdays. It had 14 pages, 11 x 16, and followed the precepts of the Democratic party.³

Cushing Herald

W. J. Rendall was the founder and editor of the Cushing Herald, which was started July 5, 1895, since No. 4 of Vol. I was circulated on Friday, July 26. The weekly was 15 x 22, the two outside pages were ready-prints, and the two inner home print. The Chandler News printed a statement that "Cushing will undertake the support of another paper. The Herald is published by Mr. Rendall of the Tryon Mercury." Rendall replied (p. 2, col. 1 of Vol. I, No. 4): "We were formerly publisher of the Perkins Excelsior--no connection with Mercury. It is published by the father and brother of the Herald's editor."

The Herald was advertised as independent and the subscription price was \$1.00. Notes from Lone Oak were printed and many notices for publication from the Perry Land Office appeared in its columns. The size was 11 x 16 and the paper had eight pages on January 16, 1902 (Seventh Year, No. 26). Later in that year the Herald sometimes had 10 or 12 pages.

The edition for Friday, November 6, 1903 (Ninth Year, No. 18), contained an account of a cyclone at Cushing on the previous Saturday morning at one o'clock in which the Herald office, "type, presses and all were lifted off the foundation."

On January 1, 1904, Rendall had reduced the number of pages in his

paper to four. The title of the weekly was the State Herald on April 15, 1904, and he numbered it "First year, No. 2." That edition had eight pages and Rendall announced, "the State Herald is installing a power plant at Cushing. We have bought new machinery and will have it here by the first of May." There was no change to December 30, 1904.

The Herald was still published as an independent weekly in 1906.⁴

Glencoe Mirror

The Mirror was first issued at Glencoe in 1900. In 1902-3 it was edited and published by J. Hunter Williams. This was a Friday paper, which supported the Republican party. Patent inside pages were used and in 1906 the circulation was 842. The next year it had grown to 865.⁵ The population of Glencoe was 200 in 1907 and the Mirror had four pages, 17 x 24, and the usual price of \$1.00 was charged by P. B. Vandament, the editor and publisher.⁶

Payne Center, Payne County

Oklahoma Hawk

Payne Center, three miles south of Stillwater, was located on the homestead of Patrick H. Guthrey and named in honor of Captain David L. Payne of whom Mr. Guthrey had been a follower. Guthrey was born in Albemarle County, Virginia, and received his education in his native state and in St. Louis, Missouri. He came to Oklahoma April 22, 1889, and settled in what was later Payne County. On Saturday, March 15, 1890, Guthrey & Evans published the first edition of the Oklahoma Hawk, which bore the dateline, "Payne, Oklahoma." This was Guthrey's first newspaper venture. The weekly had four pages of seven columns each and

the price was \$1.00 a year. The entire paper was home print and the press upon which it was printed was made by Guthrey. In June, 1890, Guthrey was joined by his son, E. Bee Guthrey, who was born February 24, 1869, in Saline County, Missouri. He attended the public schools in Texas and Nebraska and studied law at the University of Michigan. He learned the printer's trade in the office of the Reporter at Seward, Nebraska, where he worked in 1886-7 after which he worked on the Lincoln Journal, the Omaha Bee and the Kansas City Star. The edition of the Hawk for August 23, 1890, bore the names of P. H. and E. Bee Guthrey. By agreement the county was named Payne and ". . . Stillwater became the county seat, and by a special business arrangement that was reduced to writing I moved my paper, the Oklahoma Hawk, from Payne Center to Stillwater."⁷

Perkins, Payne County

Bee

The Bee was established in Perkins in 1893 in support of the Populist party. It was printed Fridays, had four pages, 15 x 22, and cost its readers \$1.00 a year. The editor and publisher was Henry E. Sharpe.⁸

Excelsior

The Excelsior, started at Perkins in 1894, was an organ of the Populists. This eight-page weekly was printed Fridays. The size was 15 x 22 inches; the price \$1.00 a year and the editors and publishers were Rendall and Sons.⁹

Journal

The Perkins Journal, established in 1891, supported the Republican party. The weekly was issued Thursdays with four pages, 16 x 22, and subscribers paid \$1.00 for it. John P. Hinkell was the editor and publisher of the Journal. An advertisement in 1895 gave 1892 as the date of founding, the number of pages as having been increased to eight, and the number of subscribers as 500.¹⁰

In 1906 the circulation was 1,000 and ready-prints were used for the inside pages. The following year the paper was printed Fridays and was edited and published by John P. Hickam.¹¹ Hickam was born at Hot Springs, North Carolina, December 1, 1870. He was educated in Tennessee and moved to Oklahoma Territory in 1897, locating at Perkins, where he owned and published the Journal for eight years, advocating single statehood for Oklahoma and Indian territories.¹²

People's Press

The year 1905 saw the establishment of the People's Press at Perkins. In politics this newspaper was advertised as being independent-Democratic. It was issued Thursdays and was made up of six pages, 13 x 20 in size. It was sold for \$1.00 a year. In 1906 the circulation was 390 and the next year, 605. C. A. Strickland was editor and publisher.¹³

Ripley, Payne County

Payne County News

The Payne County News was one of the early Oklahoma papers, since Vol. X, No. 2, was published Friday, July 15, 1904. The weekly was

15 x 22 and four pages of six columns were sold for \$1.00 a year. The paper was issued by the Advance Printing and Publishing Company and Etna J. Radabaugh was the local editor. In that edition Ripley was advertised as the "Queen City of the Cimarron Valley." The News was Democratic in politics.¹⁴

Times

The Times was launched at Ripley in 1900. In 1902-3 it was edited and published by John P. Hinkel, who was also postmaster. This Republican weekly appeared Fridays. The size was 11 x 16 inches and 14 pages were printed in 1907 for \$1.00 per annum. W. W. VanPelt was the editor and publisher.¹⁵

Yale, Payne County

Record

Established in 1902, the Record of Yale was non-partisan. In 1906 the circulation was 200 and the next year, 394. On Thursdays eight pages were issued, the inner ones ready-prints. The size was 15 x 22, and the editor and publisher was Charles F. Ford.¹⁶

FOOTNOTES

- ¹Eureka Newspaper Guide, Binghamton, New York, 1893, 1894.
- ²Oklahoma Historical Society files.
- ³N. W. Ayer and Son's, Newspaper Annual, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1880-3, 1886-9, 1890-1, 1895, 1907.
- ⁴Oklahoma Historical Society files; Lord & Thomas Pocket Directory, Chicago, Illinois, 1890, 1891, 1907.
- ⁵Lord & Thomas, 1906-7; Polk's Oklahoma Gazetteer and Business Directory, Chicago-Detroit, 1902-3.
- ⁶Dauchy & Company, Newspaper Catalogue, New York, New York, 1890-9, 1901-2, 1907; Ayer, 1907.
- ⁷Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. III, No. 1, p. 74 ff; letter from Mr. E. Bee Guthrey, October 9, 1933. Nos. 1 and 21, Vol. I, are in the files of the Kansas State Historical Society.
- ⁸Ayer, 1895.
- ⁹Ibid.
- ¹⁰George P. Rowell and Company, American Newspaper Directory, New York, New York, 1876-8, 1880, 1886-9, 1890-1900; Eureka, 1894; Ayer, 1895.
- ¹¹Lord & Thomas, 1906-7; Ayer, 1907.
- ¹²Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. V, No. 2, p. 259.
- ¹³Lord & Thomas, 1906-7; Ayer, 1907.
- ¹⁴Oklahoma Historical Society files, Oklahoma Strays.
- ¹⁵Polk, 1902-3, p. 345; Lord & Thomas, 1906; Ayer, 1907.
- ¹⁶Lord & Thomas, 1906; Ayer, 1907.

VITA

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Master of Science

Thesis: A NEWSPAPER IS BORN: THE GENESIS OF THE STILLWATER NEWS-PRESS

Major Field: Mass Communications

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Personal Data: Born in Greenville, South Carolina, February 4, 1951, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Jackson Flanders, Jr.

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